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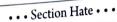
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BY DAVID MANSFIELD

AUTHOR OF HOW TO MUKE CANNED FOODS LAST

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Evan Silberman	Alan Turing
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John Kennedy	Anne Coultier
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Don't Try and Clock Me

Front Cover:

- Phil Davis

by Kristian Brevik Back Cover: Andrew Flanagan

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May 2, 2008

Best Wishes... I < 3 The Omen

This may be my last Omen layout ever (as a student). Some of you may be happy to see me go, and some will miss me. I know there are a fair number of people on campus who enjoy the Omen—do not worry. It will still be around next year!

Sometimes we think Hampshire is full of shit. A lot of the time, we're right. The systems are incredibly Oinefficient, and everyone is too busy dealing with collateral damage to fix the problems. Our philosophies and practices are at times in direct conflict with one and other; our communities are isolating, abrasive, and reactionary, but also energetic and creative. We're broke, but don't recognize resources right in front of our face.

You know what? For all its faults, Hampshire does a damn fine job of educating, creating a place where we can learn ourselves some knowledge of our choosing. Where else can we hold elitist protests on the library lawn and elitist counter-protests in our living-rooms and publications? Where else do we have Lemelson programs and twenty years of reproductive rights conferences? Where else can we do Division IIIs and so many independent studies?

Where else would you have the freedom of speech, where you can say something like this:

The smell of pot wafts down from Merrill A1. It's

nauseating and sad. It's especially sad when I'm in here at 9AM on Monday morning and I smell it, or when I'm on the lawn during Spring Jam-when there's so many better things to be doing. Drugs are a pathetic waste of your time and mine. By the time you pay off your loans, a quarter of a million dollars will have gone into your education, and the best thing that you can think of to do with your time and money is to fuck up your valuable brain? Give me a fucking break.

Defend your right to speak, and defend your right to listen. If you can't listen, how can you grow and develop your ideas? How can you defend your opinions if you don't even know what the other side has to say? Listening on all sides of various activist activities has been weak in the past month or two, or semester, or year, or five, ten years. Did you know that the same shit repeats itself over and over and over here at Hampshire?

If there's one thing the Omen has done for me, it's allowed me to identify patterns of behavior that come up again and again that Hampshire is always struggling with. It's always been a struggle of youth versus authority, of liberal versus conservative. The same amazing things play themselves out across our campus every generation. Our closed community is a microcosm, an echo chamber for

Policy

The Omen is a biweekly publication that is the world's only example of the consistent application of a straightforward policy: we publish all signed submissions from members of the Hampshire community that are not libelous. Send us your impassioned yet poorly-thought-out rants, self-insertion fan fiction, MS Paint comics, and whiny emo poetry: we'll publish it all, and we're happy to do it. The Omen is about giving you a voice, no matter how little you deserve it. Since its founding in December of 1992 by Stephanie Cole, the Omen has hardly ever missed an issue, making it Hampshire's longest-running publication.

Your Omen submission (you're submitting right now, right?) might not be edited, and we can't promise any spellchecking either, so any horrendous mistakes are your fault, not ours. We do promise not to insert comical spelling mistakes in submissions to make you look foolish. Your submission must include your real name: an open forum comes with a responsibility to take ownership of your views. (Note: Views expressed in the Omen do not necessarily reflect the views of the Omen editor, the Omen staff, or anyone, anywhere, living or dead.)

The Omen staff consists of whoever shows up for Omen layout, which usually takes place on alternate Saturday nights in the basement of Merrill on a computer with an extremely inadequate monitor. You should come. We don't bite. You can find the Omen on other Fridays in Saga, the post office, or on the door of your mod.

The Omen Haiku

Views in the Omen (5)

Do not necessarily (7)

Reflect the staff's views (5)

forget to push back.

I timed it. It took this computer over 3 minutes to open

Word so I could type this. I am reading an amazing book

titled The First Three Minutes. It is about the beginning

of the universe. It is interesting to compare the amount

of time it took this computer to open Word to all that was

happening within the first three minutes of the universe.

Let me tell you something, if this computer were God

Almighty, we wouldn't be here right now reading this.

the New Testament by some older guy at the Mt. Holyoke

bus terminal. I've been reading the Book of Matthew in

lovingly called) did not create the universe and you are

here reading this. This article was very nearly not written

for another reason as well - Jacob. Jacob Lefton and I

had a small battle down here in the Omen office. A right

proper battle with swords and daggers and bombs and

PVC pipes and salad dressing and everything. (Funny

story about the PVC pipes and the salad dressing... but

you'll just have to wait until I feel like telling it, I suppose.)

Anyways, he was very reluctant to let me have any space

in the Omen this issue. I've won if you're reading this

some very important things to say and they simply cannot

can't remember which) to my door recently. It was filled

with white powder. There was a note attached. "Cocaine.

Definitely not sugar." It was also an Omen submission...

I will sprinkle some in the Omen boxes before they

get distributed. Go ahead and sniff the Omen you are

holding right now... wait a few seconds... now tell me,

Mara, TK, Sarah, Jeff, Jerusha, Andrew and other Div

IIIs I know who I can't remember because it's nearly 2am

and I've been bloody tired since I woke up. You guys are

can do - so you'll forgive me for not being articulate. I

Chris, Rachel, Jacob, Sam, Gabe, Colin, Phil, Keegan,

The whole point of this introduction is that I have

Cocaine. A little plastic bag was taped (or tacked, I

Lucky for you, current shittier mac (as it is oh so

my spare time.)

right now.

wait until next year.

was it cocaine, or sugar?

am very happy that I was able to hang out daily with most of you for the past two years. You have made my life a

interesting, fun and most of all - filled with laughter. A lot of laughter. Probably more laughter than you wanted to hear. *heart* I hope you all go on to do amazingly awesome things and in two years... I hope you're all well off enough to let me couch-surf!

Freddy. Where are you? I hope you're around next . (Speaking of God Almighty, I was given a free copy of

> Cross Country Circus Tour In a Veggie-run 1983 School-Bus. How can an idea be so amazing and so terrible at the same time? I am really excited to learn how to drive a bus and about bus engines and how to run on grease. I am really excited to perform and to live with a bunch of circus folk and to wind up on the other side of the country. We're going to be painting the bus as excitingly as possible - so everyone reading this should be on the lookout for a campus-wide community bus-painting day. Oh, and a performance workshop on May 7th at 8:30 in the Centrum Gallery. Come learn about performance

> Omen Alumni Reunion. Planning and executing a Pig Roast Omen Alumni Reunion was one of the more amazing things I was apart of this semester. First of all the pig was delicious (see pig picture on page 23) and second of all Omen alumni are wonderful. They provide this weird sense of community and I am proud to be apart of it. I wish everyone on campus who hates the Omen would come down to layout next semester and try talking to us. Come find out -why- I love this publication so much (even now at 2am on Wednesday when I really should be sleeping) and come find out why the Omen has such a long history of people who, for all their bitterness, still come back to Hampshrie (babies in towl) to hang out with other Omen people.

> Deathfest. I DM'ed my first Deathfest ever and I'm still alive (heh) to tell about it! Look for Deathfest next and every subsequent semester!

Next Two Years. I am so very, very excited for you to amazing, and I know you know what sleep deprivation happen.

Continued on page 38...

values, force you to assert and reassert them, and help the outside world. Life here is intense, burns bright, and provides valuable experience. Let it push you, but don't And so, I leave this wonderful and valuable publication

you to see the value in freedom of thought and help you to see the value in freedom of thought and speech Please come down to the Omen office and help them out

Thank you for reading one last, rambling editorial Always remember: the Omen loves you, Jacob Lefton

P.S. Fuck you for the fact that it's after 3 A.M on Wednesday.



- NOWNC

What I Would Name My Children

TK asked me what I would name my children. While Pre given this occasional thought, I'd never come up with a suitably kick-ass set of names until just now, when I realized that I would probably name them Alonzo and Alan, after noted pioneers of computer science Alonzo Church and Alan Turing. They were both badasses, and they give their names to the Church-Turing thesis, which says some important things about how computers com-Opute algorithms. (Shout-out to my main man Marco.)

in the capable hands of Lindsay Barbieri and Evan

Silberman. I hope they piss you off and offend you,

but most of all, I hope they make you think about your

You know what they did to Alan Turing? They fucking drove him to kill himself with a goddamn poison apple. Do you know how they did it? Alan Turing was gay, man. He liked men. And I'm cool with that. But in 1952, the British government sure as hell was not. Half a century earlier, they ruined fucking Oscar Wilde, and then they decided to fucking ruin goddamn fucking Alan Turing.

PUTER SCIENCE. There would be no Internet, no GPS ous precious snowflake coddled cocooned in electricity lives if Alan Turing had not come along and said "hay guyz maybe we could liek do some shits with this computer business?" There weren't even actual COMPUT-ERS yet, and Alan Turing managed to INVENT an en-COMPUTERS. In his goddamn MIND. So, fuckers, if YOU think you know something about computers, shut the fuck up, because Alan Turing fucking DIED for you your Internet porn. sons and daughters of bitches.

He died because the British government did not like the gays. Turing was a man who had sex with men, and they chemically castrated him. For a whole goddamn year they pumped him with estrogen. He grew boobs for you goddamn it! Alan Turing put up with a fucking year of estrogen shots so YOU can download the fucking latest episode of "Lost" off of ornia.

After a year of putting up with that shit, Alan Turing killed himself. He put cyanide in an apple and ate it. Fucking Snow-Whited himself to death after a year of having the government inject chemicals into his body because he liked having sex with men, which thank fucking god is not a crime in this goddamn country anymore, thanks to Lawrence v. Texas, and no, Texas was not arguing in favor of butt piracy.

THAT, motherfuckers, is institutional discrimination. ALAN TURING FUCKING INVENTED COM- If you can't find a queer studies class, it's because we're a fucking tiny college with no money. We just DONT. navigation, no fucking anything that our fucking precariyou? They are not DISCRIMINATING against you, dude, any more than they're discriminating against computer scientists. We don't have a lot of computer science proffessors either.

So, me lads and lassies, the next time you're sitting tirely new kind of science! He did it with IMAGINARY in your room late at night rubbing out a quickie to some nameless faceless model, say a prayer for Alan Turing when you come, because Alan Turing died for

Hampshire prides itself on being an active and Dengaging campus. Probably the best recent example of

chis is Action Awareness Week. Action Awareness Week was an interesting Xphenomenon. The advertising covered the campus and The events contained within the heading of the week involved most of the campus in some way or another. OWhether students, or the rest of the community for that matter, were in support of all the demands, some of the demands, supported SOURCE, didn't support SOURCE but supported the idea or supported other means of becoming "anti-racist" a large majority of the campus was talking about an issue that needs to be talked about. I haven't seen the campus this active since... well I don't think I have. People were up in arms about whatever their feelings were. This is good. Hampshire needs that to happen in general, and also specifically about the issue of diversity on this campus.

"Actively Anti-Racist" read many emails, posters, banners and was shouted by people across campus. This term, as I feel similar to many movements, like the "anti-war" movement is frustrating. A phrase like that is grounded purely in political rhetoric. It calls everyone who doesn't agree with you "pro-racist" and cements your platform as inherently negative in relation to what the other is. There were many students on this campus who did not unquestionably support all of the demands, but does that make them "pro-racist?" Of course not. The "anti-anything" movement is a fault of social discourse of our time.

Instead of tackling the issue, it takes a highly politicized stance on an issue that does not deserve to be politicized. The "politicization" of important issues is one of the downfalls of our democracy. Issues like the war on crime or the war on drugs, though commonly known, especially in progressive circles, to not be effective are so popular because of political rhetoric. But does someone that disagrees with the way the war on crime is administered necessarily make them pro-crime? Of course not.

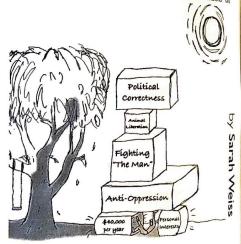
One of the reasons why this country is not where it could be is because of this political rhetoric. When the exact same referenda can be put on the ballot twice in the same town but pass overwhelming one time and fail

overwhelming another merely because the title of the tethink at the title of the tethink at the plan was changed, we seriously need to rethink the plan was changed. It's not about one way being the by plan was changed, we talk about issues. It's not about one way being tight the way being tight to issue at the same at the sam we talk about issue one way being just, it is about solving the issue at hand

NOM

However, regarding "anti-racism" at Hampshire, le action awareness week with a feeling of disappoint the week, or since then, have to Not once during the week, or since then, have I head one mention of the diversity of the student body here This, to me is one of the biggest flaws of our campus and one of the most important issues in need of discussion Hampshire's student body is not diverse, whether in look at it racially, socio-economically, religiously, or politically. One of the things that is important to me on a diverging in diverging in the diverging in the control of the cont college campus is diversity. That is diversity in culture of ethnicity, diversity in experiences, and diversity in opinion to name a few. I want my ideas to be challenged, and want to feel welcome to challenge other people's idea Having an opinion that is not the "norm" or the same with someone else is not a personal attack on someone's character but rather should be seen as a challenge for that person to challenge themselves and prove what it is they

There is a study I always love quoting but can never remember where it was from. The study found that group of random people, who had a variation of



opinions, were better able to solve critical problems than can disagree with each other. Let's create an environment a group of experts who were all of the same opinion. from a group of people who can disagree with each

here where we value each other's unique experiences and The knowledge and collective intelligence that results can use those experiences for our own growth and the growth of our peers. And for that to happen, we other is unbeatable. Let's be that group of people who need to seriously look at creating a more diverse

Action Awareness Week

The views and opinions in this piece do not necessarily represent those of the OMEN, members of SOURCE, international students, members of WARF, active students associated with Action Awareness Week (AAW), white students, the administration, or faculty members.

My name is Maya. I am a third year at Hampshire, I am an art student with political and social interests. I attend WARF meetings, but do not represent WARF. I was involved with Action Awareness Week, at a very low level of organizing and participation, and I believe in the trying to be visible and accountable to the Hampshire community. I am learning a lot every day and feel that deconstructing racism is important to my intellectual and academic pursuits and challenges.

This is a response to articles in the OMEN from a few weeks ago [April 11, 2008] that is not thorough but which I hope will open the door for more conversations. This is intended to address the sentiments expressed by the many angry and hurt students whom I have been able to engage. I cannot do justice to ALL the issues that have been raised throughout this past month or so, however, I will try to address and clarify those that I can.

Racism is a problem that we cannot afford to make an issue that is solely a concern for people of color. Despite the fact that it most directly and visibly hurts people of color and their communities, racism affects us all and we must actively combat it. Our human community is clearly suffering from racism in very real ways.

I would like to clarify some things right off the bat: WARF (White Anti-Racist Folks student group) is a group that has the intention of being an open space for conversation between white folks about race and racism. Some members of WARF were involved in AAW but created for facilitating sustainable dialogue.

As far as definitions go, there has been confusion

about terms and language. References to language were made that posited language as static. This idea is problematic because of the antiquated and politically incorrect definitions, created in the nineteenth century 3 are the only ones that receive clout. Currently Anti-Racism work and Critical Race Theory are being utilized to restructure our epistemologies through the definitions of words and our relations to them. It is these discussions that I am interested in, not those on urban dictionary.

I understand that there has been quite a bit of anger aims and intentions of AAW, as I understand them. I am and discomfort incited by AAW. That anger, though a natural response, has been the hardest for me to get through to. It is valid to be angry, but important for white folks to examine where that anger comes from and why we get angry when we feel challenged. I am trying to be frank in a way that helped me realize the way that I am implicated in the structures of racism that exist. According to Hampshire's numbers 87% of us selfidentify as "white" that means that we are a part of a system that is built on the framework of racism; a system that privileges white students. Chances are, if you identify as a white student, you are racist. Whether intentionally or not, as a white person, one benefits from a system that oppresses people of color. It supports us and we support it. These ideas are drawn from critical race theory, and deserve a lot more investigation.

Racism exists in numerous forms; personally, institutionally, and it is replicated on a societal level., There are things that can be done to counteract the negative effects of racism on folks of color and on us all.. Hearing that one is racist is hard and even offensive. However, racism is, itself, far more offensive and hurtful historically and in its current manifestations. Hearing it is part of changing and challenging it. Just saying that we are not WARF, as a group, is not taking action, instead it is a space racist is not enough. That is what I understood AAW to

There was ANOTHER noose hanging a few days

ago, the second on Hampshire's campus within the last academic year. This is a tangible example of the countless reasons that the administration MUST make changes to be actively anti-racist but so, too, must the students. Being active is a commitment that we all need to make.

Furthermore, speaking briefly to the comments of one writer about capitalism being at the core of our problems, as a lower-income student at Hampshire I certainly make a connection between economics and the inequities in the world and at Hampshire. I think that there is a lot to be said for an analysis of the system that tackles the intersectionality of the oppressions that exist in the US. There are many reasons that we cannot afford to be a "colorblind society," for example, that are not only

-AKOMEN economic. To become "colorblind" is to deny people and a history. Combating oppression of the color of the co identity and a history. Combating oppression cannot be equated with removing identity. The demands set forth by members of SOURCE and international students of many different groups of represent the needs of many different groups and persons and address many different systems of oppressions.

These dialogues are crucial to changing the systems of power that control our lives and our bodies. For the the work is just starting, but for this country the work has been happening for decades. For centuries. On a personal note, I am humbled by the incredible power of AAW and those who worked the hardest for it. I aspite towards such ability to inspire and agitate. (T)

act around my friends. I realized that I don't have to worry about the color of my friends' skin, because treating them all as friends, rather than quotas to fill makes a lot more sense. Worrying about being a "good ally" to my friends, at least to me, means that I treat them all with respect, support them when they feel hurt in any way, and try to be open to learning new things about the world. I'm not perfect. I don't think anyone is. So stop acting like you know all the answers! I don't think there's anyone who knows how to fix racism completely. There are some pretty damn good ideas, but those have mostly come about from years of discussion, bad ideas, and more bad ideas turning into some good ones,

asshole-ish, and maybe even racist sometimes! Honestly, I

can't help that. I do my best not to let that change how I

This may sound strange to some of you, but I never noticed skin color until all this angry "every white person is racist" stuff came up. That may be true, but it's only half of the truth. There have been some incredibly racist statements coming from the lips of some black folks on this campus too. And I think that makes us both at fault. There may be change that needs to happen – I personally agreed with a lot of the

I say dumb things, that sometimes my first instincts are SOURCE demands. But I will NEVER stand behind any campaign that runs itself the way the SOURCE demands ran itself. That was really insulting. I was called a white racist, part of a "snowstorm," and told that if I wasn't with you, I was against you. That's not a campaign I can stand behind. That level of intolerance in a group trying to decrease racism on campus is quite deluded. I don't pretend to know all of the things you've all been through - I can't imagine how tough your journeys to college and higher education must have been, but that doesn't mean that your struggle is unique to being black, Latina/o, Asian, or anything else. There are unique aspects, but the more you divide yourself, the more resentment will build up. If you want a wall between us, then you're doing a good job. I'd personally rather be "helping" rather than being a "white ally." What about just calling "white allies"..."friends."

You may be fucking pissed, and really angry, but give us a chance. Try to be friendly, and I'll try my best too. I'm sure we'll both make mistakes, fuck up, say some idiotic things, and probably get a little mad at times. But let's have a DIALOGUE, where everyone is free to say and ask what they want, without being told they're flat-out wrong. I'd really love that.

Hair, Racism, and Your Mom

I was watching the production of Hair last night, which I have never seen before, and I had a truly shocking experience. It did not happen during the musical, which was in many ways confusing to me (I'll go into that later), but rather, afterwards, during the Q&A session. One of the questions was something to the effect of (and this is NOT a direct quote, so I'm sure I'm getting some things wrong) "Since this is such a racist production, I want to hear from the white members of the cast how they prepared themselves to put on such a racist play. I already know that the black girls went through a lot, but what did the white cast members do?"

I was shocked to hear this question. I happen to be a white gal, and this was really, truly offensive to me. Firstly, that it was assumed that black cast members went through something that white cast members had probably not been through...secondly, that this was considered a racist production in its entirety. Initially, at least, before any thoughts had really coalesced, I was shocked that this questioner had called this play racist. Yes, I had seen some RIDICULOUS stereotypes of Native Americans/Indians, prancing across the stage with tomahawks, yes, sort-of main character black gal could be considered "marginalized" (if you could call it that, the writers of Hair made it quite confusing and it didn't seem to really have much significant plot/action, so I couldn't really find any true main characters at all). Regardless, I was not instantly struck by the racism. My overall impression was "wow, I'm really confused about the message of this play – is it trying to show that hippies are wacked the fuck out? Is it trying to be an entertaining

musical? It's obviously doing something different than the original...but I don't get it."

What I was struck by was how racism is now used on this campus, and it troubles me. Racism has become a carte blanche (so to speak) version of "that insults me." If I had heard, "I was insulted by , and I am wondering if you all meant for that to be insulting to me, and what your feelings are on this," I would have been proud of the student who stood up for his or her own feelings without blaming others for them. However, blaming "racism" for Hair being a genuine, honest attempt by an admittedly flawed person to convey the feelings of the 1960's, to bring about change in their own imperfect, sometimes idiotic, human way makes me more than a little uncomfortable. The word "racism" does not bring people together. Period. That word rarely makes real, sustainable, positive change. Period. Finding our similarities, rather than our differences...that makes a difference. Finding how we can help each other become better people, what we can learn from one another - that makes a difference. I've seen it countless times, and I've seen the opposite countless times. It's every person's choice - love or fear.

I knew something was wrong when I noticed that I had started counting how many black, Asian, Latina/o people were around me, that I'd started looking over my list of friends on Facebook to make sure that I was not secretly acting like the despicable racist I was told I could not escape being. I came to the conclusion that, yes, I am friends with people of all types, and that, at the bottom of it, skin colorhas little to do with it. Yes, I'm the first to admit that sometimes

Activism at Hampshire and Sucking Your Thumb

NOMENSECTION.SPEAKOMENOMENOMENOMENOMENO5.02.08OME

What are you fighting for? What inspires your passion? Who in your life is oppressed? Why do you shove it down my throat? Do you know that I don't care? How many of these targeted questions can I ask? If you want instant gratification, skip to last paragraph.

I am trying to understand the state of activism at Hampshire. A quick check of Hampedia tells me that there are at least 23 activist student groups at Hampshire. Wow. That's impressive. You should be proud of yourself. This means that there is one group for every 58 people on campus. This also means that every group could have 58 people and not have overlap. I bet you are involved in/have been to one of the events of 10 or more of them. OK, so that's not really the case.

If you are one of those people who actually tried to be involved with on campus activism, you might understand the frustration that many of us feel. We work hard to create interesting, useful, educational, and practical programming, but we get the same people over and over again. And there aren't 58 people who come.

Admittedly, I am not interested in most of the activist groups on campus. That is alright. You can't be able to save

everyone. I don't recommend trying. Would it hurt to show some interest though?We have Hampedia and Hampfest and probably other Hamp-words to help us find out about the stuff that we can be involved in. This is one the things that defines Hampshire. We are an activist school! We were the first to divest from apartheid South Africa. We, this year, staged a walk-out to try to get some demands met. If you had been here, would you have gotten involved in the South Africa divestment? Did you walk-out/are you actively anti-

Here's the thing, though. I don't care. If you are active in something, you are doing that for your own gratification or pleasure, and for those who you wish to help out. I don't want you to shove your justice down my throat. I am already gagging. I want you to be involved for your own sake and the sake of helping others!

Moral of the story: you go to Hampshire, and should take advantage in the activism possibilities on campus. It will make you feel good, and it helps others. Just don't force your activism on me. Hopefully, people can choose their activism for themselves.

Dean of Students: How the search went wrong

I would like to start by thanking everyone who has Uput so much time and effort into the Dean of Students Nearch process. I would like to thank the six committee members with whom I met regularly, who tirelessly Tworked to ensure that we chose the most impressive candidates: Bobbie Stuart, Will Ryan, Jaime Davila, Sue Darlingtion, Zena Clift, and Marissa Baker-Wagner. I owould like to thank Jacob Lefton for the time and effort he put into being an awesome student representative to the Board of Trustees, ensuring that studentsi voices are Dheard at the trustee level. I would like to thank President Ralph Hexter for the efforts he made to improve the search process at the request of the search committee, and for devoting so much time to making the final decisions. Finally, I would like to thank Dawn Ellinwood for accepting the invitation to become our new Dean of Students. She is a highly qualified professional who, I am confident, will work to represent the voice of the students in Hampshire administration. I am extremely impressed with her credentials and her enthusiasm, and am excited to see what she will bring to Hampshire.

That being said, the Dean of Students Search was flawed. I cannot directly speak for other members of the that some of my sentiments are shared by others with the same firsthand experience.

Hampshire. For transparency. For idealism. In hopes future searches. I speak in regard to the upcoming Dean of Faculty search process, as well in regard to ongoing conversations concerning transparency and shared governance at Hampshire. In some ways, I see this situation as encapsulating some of the core issues and frustrations I have with Hampshire. As a result of the occurrences described below, I found myself at various points cynical, disheartened, furious, and depressed.

In hopes of you actually reading this through to the end, I am providing an extremely abbreviated version of the events. If you want to read a longer description, please visit the Hampedia page (https://hampedia.org/ wiki/2007-2008_Dean_of_Students_Search).

The seven-member Dean of Students (DOS) See Committee met more-or-less weekly from Other 2007 to March 2008. We read and reviewed a huge and interviewed a huge and of resumes, conducted phone interviews with top candidates, and spent many hours discussing a should be invited to carpen. deliberating who should be invited to campus. It was this crucial point ñ the decision concerning who show be invited to campus ñ that the process went awry.

MENO

It was the understanding of the committee that the decision was in their hands. The committee was suppose to choose the final candidates, and then the President to to make the final hiring decision. However, within a extremely short space of time it was suddenly appare that deciding who came to campus was completely in the hands of the President. His decision differed significant from that of the committee.

Which makes me wonder, what was the point of having a search committee? Were we nothing more than glorified resume-readers?

I appealed to the only higher body of authoritythe Board of Trustees. I wrote them a letter describing in precise detail the situation to date, and asked for greater transparency and a clear delineation between the powers search committee, but I do speak with confidence, aware of the committee and the powers of the President

My appeal, read, in part:

Neither the authority nor limits on authority of I am writing this retrospective piece for you. For either the committee or the President in the selection of the Dean was made clear, nor was it provided in any that this search does not set the wrong precedent for documented form. I relied completely upon the accounts documented form. of others in order to understand our role in the process There is little to clarify the degree of influence the search committee has, and nor is there an objective way to assess the influence that the committee had on the President's decision. To the best of my knowledge, the President be retained absolute power in the selection of the Den Given the events outlined above, I am left to wonder if what had originally been presented as an opportunity for student, faculty, and staff participation was actually only an attempt to appear as if the entire College was being properly represented, without giving these representative any real influence.

The position of the Dean of Student Services is a vital one at Hampshire. According to the Hampshire Constitution, the Dean 'represent[s] students' interests in administrative bodies' (Hampshire College Constitution. page 7). Where is the logic in giving students no voice in selecting the person who is supposed to be their voice?"

The response? I spoke with Florence Ladd, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, via phone about a week after the Board of Trustees met. She was very kind and considerate, but she said that it was a policy issue and that it was not the place of the Board to intervene.

Meanwhile, the Chair of the DOS committee communicated to the President the dissatisfaction of some of the committee members, which resulted in us receiving an impressive multiple-paged "confidential memorandum" concerning the search process.

But did anything actually change? Yes and no. We were able to convince the President to invite an additional candidate, but there was no real effort to ensure that the process was more fair and transparent, and no sense of an effort being made to improve future search processes.

When the DOS Search started going awry, I went to the Hampshire archivist's office and asked her whether she had any documentation of how past search processes had occurred. She did not. Here is my hope that next time, and the time after that, and the time after that, this article (and its concurrent lengthier and fact-filled version on Hampedia) will help set some precedent for how search processes at Hampshire SHOULD occur, and serve as an opportunity to learn from past mistakes.

We need to keep on pushing for transparency, keep on strengthening shared governance, and keep on improving the way things work here. Being an experimental, alternative college means not assuming that the best practices for other colleges are the best practices for Hampshire.

Reading the recent memorandum from President Hexter about the upcoming Dean of Faculty search made me shudder, as it made me remember exactly why the Dean of Students search was so extremely flawed. The memo reads, in part:

"At a final meeting of the committee, I will be pleased to receive the committee's recommendation. I expect an unranked list of three viable candidates. I will, following best practice (and the practice of our two last searches), ask each member of the committee to summarize what in his/her opinion are the strongest and weakest points of each finalist."

I recall attending a similar meeting with the President (although ours was a step further back, when we were supposed to decide who would come to campus). I recall walking out of that meeting feeling disempowered, frustrated, and angry. Feeling as if I had no voice.

Faculty members had put forward a proposal about how they would like the Dean of Faculty search to occur, which was seemingly ignored. By sending out this Presidential Memorandum, the President effectively left no room for discussion and shared decision-making concerning the makeup of the search committee or the process by which the search will occur.

By operating in this heavy-handed top-down fashion, not only is the President losing my respect, but more importantly, he is alienating faculty, staff, and students who truly care about Hampshire and who are willing to devote so much of their time and energy to making it a better place. Playing lip service (e.g. MC2.0) is not the same as effective positive, constructive change, which should occur in tandem with encouraging constructive conversations and sharing important decision-making with the entire Hampshire community.

Maybe the lesson is to just stop caring so you don't just get angry and stressed and expend huge amounts of time and emotional energy on situations like the one described above. But hopefully the lesson is something a little more filled with sunshine and ponies and starry-eyed children.

Hopefully.

Oh, and by the way, the DOS Search committee is awesome. I love them all. I highly enjoyed the ridiculous number of hours I devoted to search committee meetings, and it was all thanks to them. <3

04 January 2008

Thank you very much again for the last semester; it was a pleasure indeed to suffer your tutelage! I hope that you have had an excellent breaktime (if, indeed, you are not still fully ensconced therein) & that you & yours are well.

May this new year be full of ringing good cheer & may your Christmastime stockings have been overbrimming

with short-sold CitiGroup common, &c. I thank you very much for the recommendation of ☐ Bhagwati; it made a nice & stalwart reinforcement to the new Greenspan, which was the remainder of the economic portion of my winterbreak fare. It would seem to me that those who protest globalization, & such like manifestations of the attempt by profit-driven individuals and corporations to increase demand so as to increase supply to meet it, do so from a standpoint that knows little of theoretical economics. Yet that does hardly mean that their observations are less perspicacious therefore, their logic less sound (nor even that it is not transmutable into sound economic language, such as a person more founded in such than am I might employ), nor, most strikingly, that the goals of these protesters are necessarily deviations from those goals held by the aforementioned capitalists.

For a group to protest the fact that, for example, Beirut is becoming strikingly like Milan is becoming strikingly like Dayton, Ohio, is simply for them to be positing an aesthetic for the world, & suggesting that such cultural individuality as cities (it is suggested) did once have is worth striving to retain, even to increase. They would be willing to sacrifice efficiency in other areas to see this result. They would be willing, therefore, to pay - either through the expenditure of currency or through the loss of the purchasing power of that currency - in order to see their desires actualized. They are suggesting, quite volubly in most cases, that they represent a growing demand trend, and one I might add which tends to be rather fiscally affluent. The only primary differences between them and between, say, those people who wish to purchase Big Macs, would be that the latter group is willing to pay less for their demand to be satisfied, and is well supplied by what they demand; whereas the former group is ill supplied by what they seek, and is willing to pay much more to get it.

A bright lad might make a good deal of money selling them what they want. (One can see that, in many small ways, bright lads are doing so – multiculturalism will vastly increase the price of a good in many instances – goutnet foodstuffs certainly come to mind). Yet there is demand remaining, and remaining unfulfilled – I cannot but see that as untapped profit potential.

MOM

But Look!, they will say; Globalization is Ruining out Planet / Cultures / Future / Children / whatever else will fit upon a hand-sign. They approach this as a moral issue, that is, a binary issue; they see what exists and that it will be poor for them, according to their values, if not now then in the coming days, & so they wish to see it cease, that their values might be satisfied thereby. They see a dragon and would slay it outright, heedless of their abilities to render it a fetching or even useful presence through such metaphorical media of restraint as clipping its claws, clipping its wings, tethering it, perhaps even convincing it to be their bosom companion or guard animal or beast of burden... or in simply imposing a permaiden tax upon it and reaping the rewards of that.

I would say that they look upon a damaged future, or even one which is in any way mildly reduced, even in potential, in their eyes that is, by the slightest hint of an economic price paid (in the form of one form or another of exploitation or pollution or the like), I say, they look upon such a thing as the Heart of jolly Darkness. They do not seem capable of treating it as simply a mote in an equation's eye, that may take one of a thousand shapes or any size that is able to be expressed in decimal notation (as upon a balance-sheet). Everything must be Black or White to them; no wonder they are not able to be supplied with what they demand, when they set such high value in their goals that they could not think of quantifying them in any way that might allow them in a market economy to actually be produced & delivered.

They are attempting, in short, to fight against the search for profit with the search for morality. They are using moralistic language and moral tactics in order to wage economic warfare. Little surprise that they have so far met with little but frustration.

Yet I cannot but think, as my prose no doubt reveals, that the future is not so dichromatic as it would appear to these zealots, this cream of the capitalist milking. If the world is to be drowned in its own poisons and sink

beneath the tides, or some similarly colorful expression of the Malthusian final solution, yes indeed, this would render unimportant any attempts to counterbalance it on a proposed balance sheet (short, perhaps, of celestial migration). Yet if we are to assume that globalization is a rather large thing, made up of numerous component parts, each of which contributes to the total effect through numerous & perhaps disparate actions, then globalization might be seen as nothing

but the aggregate of a number of reactions to these stimuli. Each of these reactions might be quantified based then upon its desirability or repugnance, and the sum total of them all be made to balance to the whims of those who shall live in this future world of ours. Each of them might be valued, not only in their positive value (to the actualizing party; that is, a company) but also to the remainder of the world (the actualized; that is, the protestors). And through open-market operations (such as the painful task of restraining oneself from buying one good or service or another) or through direct legal imposition, an equilibrium could be reached & maintained that

would bring maximum value to all.

For I do not think that a satisfaction of the demands of antiglobes ought necessarily to be viewed as a triumph of anticapitalist forces; I do not postulate that their goal is necessarily a diminishment of the global economy, & is motivated by a general disdain for wealth. They are, in all likelihood (though they doubtless do not see the matter in this way),

acting in the best interest of those companies upon whom

the bulk of their ire falls. They are saying, in their chants and with their slogan-laced graffiti, that the actions that a company takes today ought to be weighed, not only against their results in there here & now, but also against results that shall be had in other parts of the world, & in the future. Globalization is simply the tapping of larger markets, & to do so to larger extents than has ever before been attempted; antiglobalization protesting seems mainly

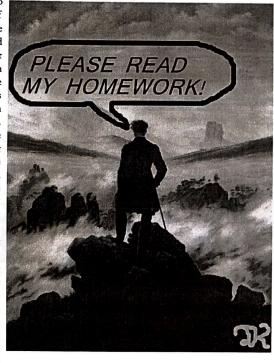
an attempt to point out that when market transactions cross the globe entire and delve deeper thereinto, the consequences of those transactions must be considered from a broader perspective than ever before has been necessary.

That, in short, there are costs associated with the actions taken by a company of which the company itself might not be aware — or which the company is ignoring, not out of a desire to maximize profit, but out of a desire to maximize profit in the short run at the expense of the long-run.

It is not therefore purely a matter of a given company acting outside of the interest of others; antiglobes

are suggesting that a company, in its zeal for profits this quarter, is denying itself profits in future quarters. That the company is acting against its own self-interest; that it is not showing due diligence, & is making decisions which will be injurious to its own shareholders. This behavior is not cause so much for rioting in the streets as it is for a minority-shareholder lawsuit.

It is possible that the companies in question are



HAMPSHIRE STUDENT

THE CHARACTER SHOULD BE JEWISH







unaware of the effects of their actions, & are sinning through ignorance rather than through simple greed. Yet in any case, if it is believed that the company (being that it is an entity which must, as must our children and our planet, exist into the future) would better serve itself by slowing its growth and progress (or at least doing either in ways which are somewhat less rapacious, but are therefore somewhat less profitable), that the future might be a place more conducive to such behaviors continuing.

To accomplish this, a corporation must first and foremost be made aware of the effects of its actions, not only in the present but in the future, and not only nearby but in the distances as well. This would require the efforts of social and natural scientists of many stripes, & between the world of protest-oriented nonprofits & academe there would seem to be no shortage of individuals capable of supply the appropriate fodder for these efforts. Secondly the corporation must be forced to assign concrete values or approximate values to these future effects of its actions - even if it must be done in so caustic a manner as number of people killed (that is, potential customers eliminated) or such like & unsavory statistics. Thirdly the corporation must be forced adjust its behavior accordingly - which, if the directors of that corporation prove unwilling to make such changes as have been clearly determined to be of profit to that company, I expect could be accomplished through simple open-market operations. These might include a reduction in the number of consumers who patronize that company, a demand by that company's shareholders that it comport itself in a manner more conducive to the success of its future operations, or, if all else fails, via the imposition of legal punishments upon companies who fail to act in the self-interest, not only of their current investors and directors, but also those of their owners and part-owners who will follow.

For profit, it seems, is not merely the thing which capitalist enterprise seeks; it is the language through which capitalism expresses itself, and therefore functions. To clearly demonstrate to a company that it is acting outside of its own self-interest - that it is sacrificing profit, even though it might be profit that shall not soon be realized, through its own behaviors - would be the only true way to prove to that company that it ought to change its behavior.

And for such instances where the company is not behaving contrary to its own interests - such instances, say, where its actions are not jeopardizing the safety of

its workers and potential customers, nor is it supplying for the future world in which its supplying any danger for the future world in which its cuppling will have to exist – such cosmetic in any danger for the such cosmetic instance and patrons will have to exist – such cosmetic instance and patrons of Beitut to Ballet as the aforementioned comparison of Beirut to Both well then, there is more to a comparison of Beirut to Both well then, to Brixton – well then, there is more to a company to that it will save reactivity. Prove to the company not that it will save money) by acting more responsible (that is, not lose money) by acting more responsibly, one the opportunity to make money have the that company the opportunity to make money by so doing Encourage, not isolation, but the diversity which was the natural result thereof. Support differentiation! Celebrate package market and sell out the package. the exotic! Make, package, market, and sell such things a people desire – and if they desire their fruit to be grown in Mexico, and their soccer balls made in Malaysia by they do not wish to see their country take on the he of those, nor the reverse to become true then the company which offers them this shall make them happy & in the grand dance of the markets, by doing this, shall

Those at least were my prima facie conclusions as I sat this morning and drank my tea. Call it 'On the Valuation of Corporate Destruction' or some such, he says with a smile and nod. Certainly as you are both my chief guide into the world of economic thought, & the man who recommended such as Bhagwati to me, I should be very interested to hear your thoughts on this subject.

...& I must say, I certainly do see why economists so often, & with such easy pride, refer to economics as 'the science of everything' - for it is the language in which might be expressed, not the nature of goods themselves, but people's estimations of those goods, based upon their personal desires and aesthetics, and the movements those goods might then make based upon such estimations. It is the science, not of the good, nor of what it can buy, but the buying itself - the friction, as it were, in the space between. It is the language of dynamism.

But you must excuse me - I have taken up enough of your time this morning. Again I do hope that you are well & I look forward to speaking with you further as this year dawns upon us.

Yours Very, David dak06@

"Je n'ai fait celle-ci plus longue parce que je n'ai pas eu le loisir de la faire plus courte."

-Blaise Pascal



Audrey

SHE SHOULD HAVE A JEWISH NAME. ANNE?

Balls, I Missed My Bus Home to Write This

In the past edition of the Omen I read an article in which The author's submission was written as a rushed scribble Ein the 40-minute gap before heading to the Omen alumni dedition layout meeting. This is my first submission to the Omen and what do you know, here I am at 10:31 in the 50men office in the basement of Merrill on Saturday night during layout. I'm currently picking the raspberry seeds gout of my teeth from the torte that I ate earlier this evening, which concluded the Seder I attended for the first night of Passover. The Seder resembled a much more laughable occasion than the one I remember from when I was 10 years old. I was in a mod surrounded by friends, drinking wine (as instructed by the Haggadah - it was for religious purposes, really) and trying our best to pronounce the names of the however-many Rabbis who, as far as we could make out, spent an entire night babbling and cracking jokes over the Torah until they ran out of wine the following morning. In case you are unfamiliar with the monotheistic religion of the Jews, most of the major holidays are based on the premise of eating enough food to feel pregnant while drinking enough booze to feel bad about feeling pregnant.

You may be wondering if I have any point tucked away inside this post-Seder ramble; the answer is yes, yes I do. You see, today is one of those days where I find myself thinking, "Man, I really love Hampshire." My morning began with my chomping on an apple on my way to work as desk monitor for the RCC. No, that's not entirely truthful: if you want to be really technical, my morning started at midnight with the Five College Relay For Life. This event is an all night long block-party filled with bad music, energy drinks, delirious DJs and sugar-filled food - mmm, candy floss - in which teams from all five college show their support for the fight against cancer. This year a Hampshire College student joined the organizing committee for the five college event and encouraged the formation of four Hampshire College teams (as opposed to the single team last year, and the complete lack of Hampshire representatives the year before). By the way, this student is ranked fifth on the "Top Participants" list out of the 1,584 five college student participants signed

While working at the RCC today, a number of radio-

afternoon on the library lawn a spiritual life advisor, with the afternoon on the mount, organized the Holi spring festival featured water guns filled. of colours. The festival featured water guns filled with the colours of "hadly tasting," brightly coloured and buckets of "badly tasting," brightly coloured powde, as described by one participating student, which students with at will. Foreive me. I'm a handlents were free to battle with at will. Forgive me, I'm a little fuzzy on the details from being stuck to the desk just inside, but from what I could see it looked like a pretty swell of time

MOM

Currently I'm on the Merrill A basement floor, belly full of wings - courtesy of the Omen budget - at 12:13, It's taken me so long to write because of the vastly varied conversation around me that keeps stealing my attention. Of the seven students here - eight if you include a guy in the camo shirt whom I've never seen before, but who has walked by the office door at least thrice since I arrived here this evening - I have met one of them for the first time tonight, briefly encountered but never really conversed with two and get regular hugs from the rest. Discussions this evening have ranged from the oddness of various pornographic images, action awareness week (yes, people are still talking about it) to the definition of 'mean,' and all of us have varied opinions, areas of study, appearances, and any other demographic you would care to comment on.

A friend of mine, a fellow Hampshire student, had a drastically different day. She went to bed at an unreasonably early hour for a college student on Friday night so that she could begin her Saturday early with approximately two hours worth of checking email, email, google news, craigslist, email, comic no. 1, one more email, comic no. 2, some other website that I forget the name of ... She then stumbled to the dining commons to enjoy the wonders of saga-brunch (tatter-tots and waffles are a few of the only things I miss about no longer being on the meal plan). In the back room of saga, this fellow Hampshire student joined several of her friends at one of the large round tables. After a few bites of scrambled eggs and one excruciatingly terrible joke (ex. A dyslexic man walks into a bra), the table springs into a food fight, complete with those scrambled eggs landing in my friend's newly groomed hair.

After vacating saga, she dug a manila folder out of her backpack containing an exposition on some recent actively-coloured students made their way in and out of the restrooms throughout the four known in and out of the restrooms throughout the four known in and out of the restrooms throughout the four known in and out of the restrooms throughout the four known in and out of the restrooms throughout the four known in and out of the restrooms throughout the four known in and out of the restrooms throughout the four known in and out of the restrooms throughout the four known in and out of the restrooms throughout the four known in and out of the restrooms throughout the four known in and out of the restrooms throughout the four known in and out of the restrooms throughout the four known in and out of the restrooms throughout the four known in and out of the restrooms throughout the four known in and out of the restrooms throughout the four known in and out of the restrooms throughout the four known in and out of the restrooms throughout the four known in and out of the restrooms throughout the four known in and out of the restrooms throughout the four known in an analysis of the restrooms throughout the four known in an analysis of the restrooms throughout the four known in an analysis of the restrooms throughout the four known in an analysis of the restroom in th the restrooms throughout the four hours of my shift. This stop for the Hampshire College underground publication,

"Not The Omen." Didn't you hear about it? It was founded after the most recent attempt to shut down this very publication. As my friend approached this hidden, and very particular tree-with-trap-door-triggering-knot-leading-todrop-box, she noticed a student from her cheese-making class following not-so-sneakily behind her. Upon realizing his cover had been compromised, this classmate whipped out a cudgel and charged at my friend screaming, "WE WILL NEVER LET YOU CARRY ON THIS WAAAAYY!" She quickly dived to the side and a piece of apple still stuck in her hair from the earlier food fight dislodged itself, and conveniently flew into the cudgel-donned classmate's open

mouth, causing him to choke. My friend phoned the EMTs, dropped off the manila folder, and ran back to her room to check her email again.

Okay, so all that didn't really happen to my friend. But here at Hampshire College, it could happen. Hampshire's the kind of place where an undefinable amount of unexpected events could happen at any given moment. And most of these random things that happen around our modest campus occur because other students cared enough to make them happen, even publications like the Omen. That's pretty neat. And if you don't like what someone else did, you can always

Imaginary Gay Lovers

his life would have been like had he been gay. Sheldon, Portnoy's imaginary lover, is a gay Jewish man who makes amazing herb dressing.

I also want an imaginary gay lover. I want a fantasy world where the Sheldon to my Portnoy is there to cook me dinner after a hard day's work. In my mind, a larger, quieter man than me is holding down the fort of my psyche, tolerant of my whimsies but not of my self-doubt. My imaginary gay lover reassures me that the essays possibly be? world is my oyster.

I often find myself wishing I were David Sedaris. a better half in our heads giving us hugs and How could you not want to be David Sedaris? Aside from believing in us.

Alex Portnoy, the title character of Philip Roth's being in love with someone named Hugh (Hugh!), you o "Portnoy's Complaint", fantasizes briefly about what are a brilliant writer, you live in France, Ira Glass is like your best friend, and you are, I suspect, pretty comfortably well-off. I mean, selling 2 million books to the disaffected hipsters of America has to earn you something. It's tough, in today's blog-or-be-blogged climate, to make a name for yourself as a writer. How many famous and o successful essayists do we have these days? Not many, I suspect. Maybe a few people know who Jonathan Lethem a is. I mean, how big can the market for acerbic personal

Anyway, maybe we'd all be a bit happier if we had

Abnormal Addictions

I think I've become addicted to cigarettes. This is no smoking? None. Aside from addiction. And that's not normal addiction. Mind you, I have never smoked one. However, every time I walk past someone who is smoking a cigarette, my body/mind says, "I want one!! Go get it!" Odd. Again, I want to stress that I haven't taken even one drag. Every time, there is a conscious train of thought in Brain that goes something like:

'You should go over and ask to bum a drag or a smoke.' of full cigarette. No one has to know. A full cigarette would be better. You'll feel so much better. No you actually wouldn't. You are full of shit. Always trying to convince Hampshire campus. Any suggestions? yts07@ me to do stupid things. Really, what are the benefits to

a benefit. Wait, are you saying that you aren't curious? I thought you prided yourself on your curiosity and the ability to dig into the knowledge of that curiosity. But I do. I'm just trying to look out for my shitty health. You don't need to add to it by smoking. Do you want be wheezing all the time, and get emphysema? No. So don't

And it's finished until the next time I see someone dragging away. A whole 1.68 minutes on hampshire.edu



Excerpts from (Former Hampshire President) Greg Prince's New Book

Excerpts from "Teach Them to Challenge Authority: Education for Healthy Societies" by former Hampshire College President Gregory S. Prince Jr.

"Every book has a multitude of origins. The beginning of my understanding of the purpose of education lies in my years as an undergraduate. Around that time, four African American students from North d Carolina Agricultural and Technical College (A&T) began to take their studies in philosophy and the contemporary world seriously. They began to ask a series of critical questions that eventually became one simple and profound question: Why could they not eat lunch at the same counter as whites in Greensboro, North Carolina? Their straightforward answer in 1960, my junior year at OYale University, effectively began the civil rights sit-in movements in the United States. This activism connected a younger generation to what an older generation had begun with the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, several years earlier.

As college freshman, these four students asked questions—in this case about race and the nature of society—analyzed possible answers, made judgments, and then acted in a creative, constructive, appropriate, and courageous way. Their simple act of sitting at a whitesonly lunch counter, asking to be served, and when refused refusing to leave until forced to by closing or police, and the dignity with which they undertook it, drew from many sources-family, church, community, and school. But what affected me deeply was that they were students my age, much like me in some ways; but in other ways they were so much further ahead of me at that moment in their ability to connect what they were studying to their society and to understand where authority needed to be challenged and having the courage to do so.

Their act came at a time of quiet ferment and questioning in the United States. At the end of the 1950s, college students were beginning to wonder about the purposes of education. Helping to stimulate these

questions were images and articles about the courage and determination of students, such as those who took stands against immoral authoritarian governments in Hungary and South Africa. Some of those students, forced to live in exile. ended up on carious American campuses, including Yale. Their presence and their stories represented a level of student purposefulness that, as the end of the 1950s. was not a part of college life at Yale or any any other campus in the United States, for that matter. The events in North Carolina changed all that.

The North Carolina A&T students answered our question about the purpose of education. Their answer was identical to what those of us at Yale had been hearing from the exiles students, but we had yet to realize that their brand of activism also applied to our situation. Education has multiple purposes, but learning how to ask essential questions and how to challenge dogma, tradition. and injustice in appropriate and constructive ways is its highest purpose. Preparing citizens to act thoughtfully to create more just, open, and creative society gives form, substance, and meaning to the often abstract concepts of freedom and democracy.

Constructively challenging authority requires the basic habits of mind a liberal education seeks to instill: the ability to frame the essential questions; to think critically, analytically, and ethically about the problems those questions identify; and to respond effectively, creatively, and wisely to the implications of the analysis. It requires not only an ability to appreciate the complexity of a problem but also to identify its essence in order to reach effective, just, and fair conclusions.

The answer the four North Carolina A&T students provided about the purpose of education exemplified all of the aforementioned qualities and yet was replete with irony. The irony stemmed from the fact that these students came from a technical university, not a liberal arts university, not was the university listed among the country's "elite" institutions. As the students' actions played out, commentators of the day noted the visual

of neatly dressed, polite African American Monday morning from 1989 through 2005, when classes students sitting at the stream of them. Those images underscored the police threatened them. Those images underscored the from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. So I could talk with students police threatened "means" and "ends." The critical relationship between "means" and "ends." The about any subject they wanted to discuss. Breakfast was and with the dignity of the means they chose to respond to the situation. They understood that no matter how worthy the end, the means were equally important.

in conversations with my wife, Toni Prince, about conversations that were not taking place. In the 1980s she began commenting to me about the students with whom she worked. She coached skiing and horseback riding and was increasingly perplexed that the kids she coached rarely seemed to discuss the major issues of the day in their schools. When they arrived after school, she would ask them if they had talked about an impending foreign intervention, a political campaign, affirmative action, or whatever the "front page" controversy of the day might be locally, nationally, or internationally. More often than not, there had been no discussions of these important matters in school. She became increasingly concerned that teachers were becoming so fearful of the anger that controversial topics might generate and of the litigiousness off U.S. Society that they simply avoided controversy whenever possible.

She had alerted me to a trend that was nonexistent during our youth and one I would never have noticed. since I was working exclusively with college students. We had both attended primary schools where such substantial conversations about important current affairs were standard: she was at Sidwell Friends School and I attended St. Albans School, both in Washington, D.C. Those conversations opened for us a whole range of educational experiences that we valued deeply, and we despaired that the current generation of children had lost a critical source of information and insight. We worried that children were caught in a growing bubble of silence, increasingly oblivious to the world around them. They seemed unable to ask meaningful questions and did not know how to have a debate or disagreement with someone, yet still be friends.

The third point of origin again related to conversations, but ones that took place during my years as president of Hampshire College, a liberal arts college in Amherst, Massachusetts. With only four or five exceptions, every

in their space, so no appointment was needed.

The students probed, complained, questioned, and explored. They shared concerns and pressed me for opinions. The normal whining that can characterize The second point of origin came much later, any group of students in a university did occur, although not as much as I had originally expected. Early on, one student assured me there would not be too many whiners: "They don't like to get up at seven-thirty." The students who came to breakfast were anything but silent.

The concerns voiced at these breakfasts were wideranging ones: appointments and reappointments of faculty and staff; curriculum, college regulations, and discipline cases; there were conversations about resources for academic programs and extracurricular organizations such as the student Emergency Medical Technicians, and about national and international current events. During this period, the Berlin Wall fell, the USSR splintered apart, China became a major economic power, the United States fought th first Gulf War and started the second, 9/11 took place, and the economy went twice from expansion, to recession, and then to recovery. Through all the conversations, profound and petty alike, the students delivered one consistent message: what mattered most to them was whether the college and I, as its president, were acting in ways that were consistent with what they perceived to be the values and goals embodied in the college's mission. They had two common, strongly help expectations: the college should exhibit the behavior it expected of students and hold true to its espoused values. Students measured almost every decision the administration made against these standards.

Reflecting both the cynicism of youth and of the culture as a whole, many did not believe there was much chance that the college, its president and administration, or the board would live up to those expectations. At times they treated those breakfasts like a contest or a sport. They prepared, practiced, and often arrived as a team. They sought to confront me with an issue about which they felt they had a clear ethical position—a position they felt I might not support because of "practical" pressures. How I reacted would reveal whether or not the college was committed to its ideals. They were doing what all Continued on page 21

"Why is the Omen So Mean?"

Recently a friend asked me this question. I have three points to make in response to this question:

#1- The Omen is not mean.

To confirm my general impression that The Omen ois not mostly mean articles, I selected six random Omen Zissues from the archives and reviewed the Mean to Nice pratio. I found that the articles were 75% "nice", although Ethe definitions of "mean" and "nice" were admittedly subjective in my short experiment. Details about my Treview of past Omen issues can be found at the end of chis article.

#2- The writers of Hampshire College are mean, not "The Omen".

The Omen is entirely composed of student submissions. As Molly Mcleod wrote in her submission to "The Omen" issue 5 of Vol. 27, (Oct. 27 2006), "I'm well aware that the Omen has long had a reputation for being hurtful and pretentious. But the quality of it depends entirely on you! Take advantage of it, but don't abuse it!"

#3- The last thing worth note is that in my review of past Omen issues, the overall trend was towards positive or neutral articles, but in certain categories the numbers did reverse. In particular, 66% of the articles from the "correcting others" category were hurtful, attacking, and/ or mean-spirited, and 50% of the comics were negative or mean, although not to specific individuals. These numbers point to the theory that correcting others, while it can be done in a respectful way, often comes off as mean. Especially when dealing with specific people or behaviors, and writing to a publication rather than talking face to face, it is easy to start making accusations, attacks, and slinging mud. In the case of the comics, I think the numbers were skewed because of a recurring series of comics in which the punch-line was always an insult to the main character, and I counted those as mean. In the category of general "humor", 33% were what I would call mean, a remarkably low number considering how easily humor can become mean-spirited. My advice is to always speak from personal experiences, avoid generalizations, and let things go.

I will now list some details about my examination of previous Omen issues:

The Method

I selected the six issues that were filed in a stack as "recent", and these included the Erotica issue, the Post-Apocalyptic issue, and the Valentine's Day Special issue from this year. The other three were typical issue, at

I found it difficult to define "mean" when categorizing submissions. I categorized a submission as "mean" if it included any of the following:

-An attack on a person, concept, or group of people whether stated or merely implied

-A negative accusation

-Lots of swearing or negative labels

There were some articles which would have made many people uncomfortable, and even articles which made me uncomfortable, that I didn't count as "mean". For example, I didn't count any of the Erotica submissions as "mean", if you exclude those submissions from the total then the ratio changes and you get roughly 68% "nice" articles.

The Results

Here are the numbers in each category of submissions:

Editorials: 4 nice, 2 mean

Correcting Others: 6 mean, 3 nice

Humor: 10 nice, 5 mean

Poetry: 2 nice

Comics: 4 nice, 4 mean

Other: 10 nice, 1 mean

"I never could get the hang of Thursdays": 4 nice (Rachel Rakov Rocks!)

Erotica: 14 nice

The "Other" category included an interview, reviews, lists, and more. I didn't list the Valentine card submissions or the "Guy Fawkes Day" card submissions, because I think all the positivity and negativity in those pretty much balances out to neutral. No, this is not real science, I am an IA/CS major and it is late at night. I blame any inconsistencies in my numbers on lack of sleep, and I thank the editors of the Omen for taking my submission at this hour.

Lastly, of the roughly 5 things I have either submitted

OMNOMSECTION.SPEAKNOMNOMNOMNOMNOMOMENNOM05.02.08NO

or dreamed of submitting to "The Omen", none of them is what I would call mean. I appreciate that "The Omen"

Do you disagree with any of what I've said? Then submit it to The Omen! (Unless this is the last one, in which case I get the last word, tee-heel)

Lastly, I have absolutely no ill-will towards the person who asked me this question, and I hope they don't take this article as anything too serious. Thanks!

Greg Prince Continued

Continued from page 19

young adults will do at some point with their elders: test

purpose of what education should be about; they felt that

education should offer serious examination of issues and

values in a context that was real, not artificial. The college

administrators, faculty, and publications constantly told

the students that they had to learn how to think critically

and to ask the essential questions; they had to take, defend and develop positions; they had to be engaged and

involved in their work and their community while being

ethical, just, and fair. Conversely, they wanted the college

to be engaged, to take outspoken positions on social

and political issues, and forcefully lead its students. The

administration, collectively and individually, attempted

to respond. I often responded that although the college

did not take a position on every issue, the one stance the

college could never take was that the college

and its president should not take positions.

Their "tactic" was to challenge me to assess the real

-Flarnie

Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam

My email inbox stuff has begun to get more graphic O and interesting. Creativity on the part of spammers?! And I think they're all selling the same product. Who knew that female college students were such a prime market for Viagra?

Titles in my inbox:

Dance in the sheets all night long
A cock to remember

I did her in the wild last night How to Enlarge Penis Size Sublime measurement can be achieved fast Satisfaction = blue pill+ women What would a PhD title do for your resume? April is Make Love Month Inexpensive symbols of swagger society This is what I call a sexy celebration-sender dix Spiffing timepieces for a low price An opportunity to penetrate deeper Your device is set to grow Tiny dimension is curable Hi from serena Sufficient length is what we offer Get ready to the wildest nights of your life with... It should be long and not thin! Get up stronger and harder Slap and kiss and bang her hard Make your tool large and really hard She was drunk and I did her Shoot off deeper into her Just a littler something for the morning from Cap'n Jack Jack

What kind of increase can I expect? Stop complaining about \$ize We let you be more a man Be a king of her bedroom Booster for your manhood Get vourself an immense love gun!



MENOMENOMENISSOL.

Application to Live With Awesome Ladies in Mod 16

Kate Rodman, intern extraordinaire, is going to be in Mod 16 next year. She gets to dole out extra points to people she think would be ideal to live with. If you're looking for a mod and think that a secure double in an intern mod might be right Dyou, check out the following application! If you actually want to send it in, send it to Tabitha Boschetti, Box 518. Otherwise, Ujust talk to us.

0		
M Name_		
of Europe	Roommate's Name	_

O[Check all that apply]

We prefer to play our music: -with the bass thumpin' and the hos a-jumpin'

-as an intimate experience directly between the ears and the headphones

-set for dancing, but only if everyone else in house is

-when I can find an audience to hear the latest song I

-through a bullhorn

When I see people in my common space doing crafts, I:

-Break out my project and get crafting -Kick their sewing boxes over and macramé them to

-Go about my business, maybe ask if I could get a

button off of them

-Break out my mandolin to serenade the event

How do I feel about getting an extra housing point because this is an intern mod, and being ridiculously secure in my housing situation for next year?

-Wooooooooo!

-Woo.

-Meh.

-Eh. -Chill.

Please check if you object to any of the following experiences in your future mod:

-Being around people trained in conflict resolution/crisis

Being around excessive tea consumption

-Boyfriends who come over and vacuum

-Occasional sarcasm

-Intimidation by Julia Partington's intense student-group involvement

-Having my feelings validated

-Absence of drug-use

-Living with a vegetarian, and/or non-vegetarians

-Discussion of transportation issues, critical psychology, or The appearance of baked goods to eat

MENOMEN

-Exposure to new and exciting board games -Exposure to puns.

Which of the following best describes your attitude toward

ess: -I will fucking kill you if you leave that lint on the

ch.
-I will fucking kill you if you throw out the pizza I left on the couch last week.

the couch last week.

-I will fucking kill you if we can't all get all just get along about this kind of thing.

How many super-hot friends do you have?

-Just enough to invite over and introduce to my new modmates

-Just enough to get me out of the house every now and then

-10,000, And they all want to party in my mod every day. Especially weeknights.

Which of the following attitudes most apply to you:

-Sometimes, I just need to belt out the National Anthem at 7am

-Ouiet hours, shmiet hours

-People talking in level tones, even in the middle of the day, just piss me off. I'm a jerkface.

-I can be animated, but I also like people to feel comfortable and am quiet when people want to sleep.

I NEED to have these things in my mod:

-Alcoholic beverages.

-A single bedroom of my own.

-No housing interns.

-No C.As.

-Nobody who works at the STAR Office

-an elephant

-recreational drugs -orgies on the couch

-lots of perfume/cologne

-fires. Lots of fire. And fire hazards

For more information on the future Mod 16, see our Hampedia listing or e-mail tmb06, jbp06, or knr06

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Gives Thanks for a Tasty Pig.

Jeff Corwin

he's a pansy douchebag and a 'Steve Irwin-got-killed-bya-sting-ray' profiteer.

The man has no balls. I saw this commercial for his He was a surfer too. show where he was holding a fucking little garter snake FUCKING ANIMAL PLANET CHANNEL. YOU HAVE YOUR OWN SHOW. YOU CANNOT BE A FUCKING LITTLE EUNUCH ABOUT SNAKES, ESPECIALLY THE PISS-ANT ONES.

Steve Irwin? THAT was a man. The son-of-a-bitch would get right in the grill of 15-foot crocodiles that would take your face off faster than the movie Face/ Off and the whole time, he was as non-chalant as pickin' daisies.

dirty person. That whole scandal with him feeding the gator with his baby? That was an inconvenient camera angle. Who the fuck are you to criticize? You haven't been allowed to baby-sit since the time you were watching your kid brother and you decided to get high and he wandered into the swimmin' pool. Just like in the commercial.

But you know who really sucks? Jeff Corwin. I heard from a reliable source that he thinks Hampshire is trash. Why else did he bail on us? When the Honorable George Takei was unable to attend for legitimate business reasons. who was sitting in his palatial Cape Cod estate, sipping port and feeding his exotic goldfish, reveling in the death of an Australian hero and cursing the fine institution of Hampshire College? It's Jeff Corwin. He's a fuckhole.

Steve Irwin is a stand-up guy. I saw this one episode where the first croc he ever caught died, and he was so upset. He knew that croc for years and they were mates. The episode ended with him talking about that croc and he broke down into tears. I shit you not... I cried too.

And he KNOWS these crocs, man, like they're his buddies, his aces, his terminal velocity. They do right by him. And they love each other too. He was always talking about how Graham loved his girl Mindy just like how he loved his wife Terri. Gorgeous.

I saw this interview with him once, and he used the expression, "like a lizard sunnin." That is SO COOL.

Let me tell you why I hate Jeff Corwin. First of all, Why the fuck are you sitting here reading this when you should be wrestling alligators and graphing. should be wrestling alligators and grabbing poisonous snakes by the tail, havin' em snap at your face and shit?

So when I heard that our two major choices were show where he was holding a rucking fitte gard between George "Sulu" Takei and Jeff "Pants-Pisser" and acting all creeped out by it. YOU'RE ON THE between George "Sulu" Takei and Jeff "Pants-Pisser" Corwin, I made a blood oath that I would rather die by jumping off a bridge built by a near-sighted MIT student than attend my graduation with Jeff "Captain Blowhole" Corwin.

And Sulu?! Where art thou, Sulu? I feel lost without you, like I'm in space and I'm without navigation. It's like the Klingons are off the port bow, and Bones is getting high off Romulan ale, and Kirk's banging an alien chick who's actually a Klingon in disguise, and when he finds out And don't tell me he was a bad father, you fucking he's gonna get pissed and kill them with his phaser, ZAP ZAP! He says. And Spock, bless his heart, is matching wits with a TI-83 Plus. Remember those? I used to play with that thing all day. I had Mario, the Periodic Table, Tetris... Tetris should be on every single electronic device, I don't give a shit if it's an airplane cockpit or a knock-off Rolex, it should have Tetris. The Communists finally did something right. That game was from Russia with fun, sir.

If you remember high school (and I do) life was all about the TI-83 pluses. It was a post-Pokemon, pre-cell phone day and age when we finally had the freedom to say "No, I'm not playing games, I'm doing arithmetic," and those stupid teachers had to retreat. Fucking Mrs. Thorwart, you knobbly old pineapple. Where do you get off telling me I'm bad at math? I got a 730 on my SATs, you long division slut. You crushed my dreams and marred my perfect record. When I found out my brother has her now, I was so mad.

But I digress. Jeff Corwin is a Nazi. He gets drunk when she got serviced by the UCLA Trombone Squad.

Steve Irwin was an American hero. I don't care if he was from Australia, that just means he's a bad ass Brit.

Not one of those phony, "Spot o' tea, gov'nor?" Brits, but a really awesome piece of ass type Brit. Brits like but a Bond, Sigourney Weaver, and Elizabeth Bennett. James Bonu, Signary and still take your trash donates \$2,000 a year to Al-Qaeda. out in the morning.

Marketability

Commercials are a really good way to figure out what

things I want to buy. I refuse to eat at Taco Bell, because

O their commercials piss me off SO MUCH. I cannot

thing in the world. Yes, you've eaten a meal, and now

you're stuffed. We all get it. And aren't we all so proud of

Nou. That little fucking dog they used to have? Awesome.

Burger King has AWESOME commercials. I can

honestly say without use of exaggeration or hyperbole

that the Burger King is the greatest monarch ever. He's

always so happy! And he's multi-talented, whether he's

kicking a football or hiding in your backseat, he's got a

orin wide as a Tuesday in 2001. His benevolence knows

no bounds. And Burger King has Coke, not that Pepsi

bullshit they have at Taco Bell and KFC. And all your

bleeding heart, This billion-dollar soft drink corporation

is worse than this billion-dollar soft drink corporation'

bullshit aside, Coke tastes better than Pepsi. Go write a

Justin Long commercials where he's making fun of that

other guy. That's like if a bunch of lunatic punk rockers

went up to Jimmy Buffet and beat him up for being

'square,' even though he represents a bad ass operating

with the two old-timey guys yapping about whatever.

I hate Apple computers, because of those fucking

fact, check the internet), their credibility is shit.

Steve Irwin could rock you like a wrecking ball. In conclusion, if you care about anything ever, you should hate Jeff Corwin too. He



Snakes on a Plane is the best movie that was ever O made. I saw that movie twice in theaters, and both times were the midnight showing opening night. No, I'm not bullshitting you. I went to the 10 o'clock showing with my 7 brother and little Petey Ashton. My brother and I wore green sheets with eyes cut out and red construction paper o tongues glued on. Peter went as a plane. He got there explain this enough. Taco Bell commercials are the worst before us, and when someone asked him what he was going to see, he said "World Trade Center." After that was over, my brother and I stuck around to see the 12:15 screening. I didn't find out what Samuel L. Jackson said D_{But} ever since they killed it and put it in a burrito (true after the line "Enough is enough! I have had it with these mother fucking snakes on this mother fucking plane!!" because everyone cheered for a solid brick. It wasn't until January 2nd, 2007 that I figured it out, because that was the day I went to Best Buy and made the best purchase ever and bought the DVD, Snakes on a Plane.

It was awesome.

Doom is the best movie that was ever made. I went to Boston to see it with my friends, Homeless Brian, Little Petey Ashton, and Saucy Sarah on opening night, and we managed to get the entire audience to cheer during the title sequence. The most fulfilling moment of my life was when I turned around and saw hundreds of people clapping and hooting and hollering. After the movie, we saw this girl smoking a cigarette and crying while pleading with someone on the phone. Make-up was running down her face. There was a hilariously tragic poetry in her soul, like a clown getting audited, or the March of the Amish. None of us said a word until we were a hundred feet away, and then Brian, Peter, and I all said how hilarious it was. Sarah was the only one who didn't think it was funny.

It was awesome.

300 sucks. If I wanted to watch gay porn, they would be Vikings, not Greek assholes.

Crocodile Hunter: Collision Course is the best movie that was ever made. I haven't been able to watch it start to finish since the passing of Steve Irwin, because I get really upset.



I drink Guinness because it's delicious and I'm not off his own sense of self-worth every night, caterwauling some pushover who needs to drink a lite beer. But if I to the tune of 'Margaritaville' every night while his wife was a pushover who needed to drink a lite beer, I'd start porks the neighbor's hounds, dreaming of a long lost time drinking Guinness based solely on those commercials

Man they can blow those horns.

Legislated by Mike Doyle

That is classic stuff.

system that never lets me down.

book about it.



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Lord of the Rings

Introduction

Mike

"The most powerful and magical language is music. The reason of for this is that music is the original language. It is the language of acreation."

-Peter J. Kreeft The Philosophy of Tolkien'

CREATION AND DESTRUCTION

Music has been around for as long as there have been people and longer still than that. For different people it may mean different things, and in every part of the world, music takes new meaning. In Africa, music has rhythms the western ear is unaccustomed to and may not even perceive. In India, our 12 semi-tone octaves must seem plain to theirs with many times that number of notes. Everywhere you go, music has been there for lifetimes and sounds off as a representative of the people that call

Music has existed since creation because at its core, music is creation. In the Holy Bible. God says 'Let there be light,' and light is. It did not come from a paint brush or by force; it came at the idea of a voice, a sound if you will. As an art form, it is truly organic like no other is save its close partner, dance. It can record history, pass on legend, or entertain a crowd. Music is a given of any culture.

So when JRR Tolkien began his legendarium with a great music that shaped the world, he knew what he was doing. He was making a world that was filled with sound, where even the history was so entwined with music that it was a significant powerful thing. The Silmarillion begins with Eru Ilúvatar creating the Ainur with the Flame Imperishable. He called them together and spoke to them of themes of music. And when they understood, they sang and played his music in what was called The Music of the Ainur (Silmarillion, 3).' The harmony they created was to be the harmony which would hold together Arda, they world they made through song.

But as there is no day without night, the harmony would not be unhindered. One of the Ainur was more powerful than the others, and he had his own ideas for what the shape of the world should take. His name was Melkor and in days to come, the Elves would name him 'Morgoth' which translates to 'dark enemy' in one of Tolkien's invented languages. As the music played and Morgoth devised his own plans, he set to change the music to his liking:

...It came into the heart of Melkor to interweave matters of his own imagining that were not in accord with the theme of Iluvatar, for he sought therein to increase the power and glory of the part assigned to himself... Some of these thoughts he now wove into his music, and straight-way discord arose about him, and many that sang nigh him grew despondent, and their thought was disturbed and their music faltered; but some began to attune their music to his rather than to the thought which they had at first (Silmarillion, 4).

And right at the beginning there was strife, starting with music. It would come to pass that every foul creature, every war, and every deceit was born before time when Melkor began his dissonance. And just as The Music of the Ainur set the stage for a battle of good and evil in Arda, it also made Arda a place that would be filled with music. It is that music that helps complete Tolkien's world. It gives us the sense of history without needing to know the details of his fictional timeline. It gives the

Over time, music has served many different purposes. As a means of story. Over time, music this section of 'English' literature is the epic poem, Beonaf, For comfort telling, the oldest example of 'English' literature is the epic poem, Beonaf, For comfort telling, the oldest example of language telling, the oldest example of language for comfort and strength for the soul, hymns have been sung in places of worship. Even in times and strength for the soul, hymns have been sung in places of worship. Even in times and strength for the sout, hybrid land to the 1860s, the spirits of Union soldiers were of war music had an important role. In the 1860s, the spirits of Union soldiers were of war music had an important sepublic," while "Dixie's Land" did the soldiers were lifted at "Battle Hymn of the Republic," while "Dixie's Land" did the same for the lifted at "Battle Hymn or use repeated at tanks would advance while Wagner's "Ride Confederacy. In World War II, German tanks would advance while Wagner's "Ride Confederacy. In wong was 11, occurs, striking fear in the hearts of their enemies. In of the valkyries prayers of the valkyries pray

In The Lord of the Rings, Frodo Baggins and his companions enter Elrond's Last In The Lord of the rungs, several Bornes are sung of the triumphs and loss from Homely House of Paragraphs and loss from ages past. We catch a glimpse of the story of Beren and Luthien, which was a task ages past. We cauch a general state much like Frodo's (LOTR, 193-4). The young Hobbit fated to carry a burden on a much like Frodo's (LUCIA, and only could hopeless venture heard a story of lovers divided by a similar fate, and only could they hopeless venture neares a word, which is after the course of deads that rest by traveling around himself. The Lord Elrond himself says, "Such is oft the course of deeds that move the wheels of the world: small hands do them because they must, while the eyes of the great are

The Song of Beren and Luthien reveals to the company more than a slim hope at success. It is the first shred of evidence we are given as to who Strider, the Man that at success. It is the limit the Man that sings the song, really is. He is a distant descendent of those ill-fated lovers, and that sings the song, reasy is bloodline makes him the rightful King of Gondor (LOTR, 194). Though these songs blooding hands and the blooding hands of years before him, they help him understand how greatly the past will affect him.

When Sam finds himself alone and weary at the doorstep of the dark lords kingdom, he sings a song he never heard before in a loud clear voice filled with strength. It is here that he casts aside his fear and discovers his kidnapped master. Frodo Baggins. The resolve of his quest is fortified at the sound of his voice and the Orcs of the tower scatter at the sound of what must surely be an Elf-warnor (LOTR

The walking tree-folk, the Ents, suffered many losses at the will of Saruman a wizard who turned evil from his lust for power. When they march to Isengard, their numbers increase as their music "began like solemn drums, and above the rolling beats and booms there welled voices singing high and strong" (LOTR, 484) Were it not for the rousing of the Ents, Saruman would have gone unhindered and his armies of Urûk-hai would have slain many Men fighting the forces of the true threat, Sauron. The stirring chants of the Ents may have proved one of the many small pieces necessary for Gondor's victory over the armies of Mordor.

And these are just a few examples we see of music playing a part in the outcome of a great war. There is much to be said of the spirit and the will of the soldiers who fight or even the small messenger with a difficult task. Even the slightest effort made to light a spark through music could catch like wildfire and give strength to the battleweary. In Lord of the Rings, despair is everywhere because on all sides, it is a hopeless venture. Were it not for the Men taking up the cry, most of these battles would be decided before they even began. The War of the Ring was not going to be won with strength in numbers, but with strength and hope against the dark clouds of Mordon And at the heart of their victory were the sounds of music.

Character growth and cultural identity

THE MUSIC OF IMMORTALS

"He raised up both his hands, and in one chord, deeper than the Abyss, higher than the Firmament, piercing as the light of the eye of Iluvatar, the Music ceased."

-JRR Tolkien, The Silmarillion

Tolkien imagined the Immortal folk of Middle-Earth to be present yet distant all at once. His two most popular works, The Hobbit and Lord of the Rings feature Hobbits as our main characters, and as a rule, we seldom see into the minds of Immortal beings as we do the Hobbits or other Mortals. As such, we only hear the thoughts of these far-seeing people spoken incompletely so they can be understood by their Mortal company.

The Elves are described to be ever-present yet distant; they are always aware of the surroundings but they are also aware of the past, as well as the rocks, trees, grass, NOMEINGE TOTILINOMENOMENOS.02.080M and living creatures around them. They are so skilled in music that often Mortals feel to the charge are in a waking dream.

and assess though they are in a waking dream. The giant tree-people otherwise called Ents have a native language described as The giant tree-property and the strictest of terms, Ents are not immortal benefit of rolling long and rolling in such a way that normal speech sounds like music of rolling long and rolling in other strictest of terms, Ents are not immortal benefit of the strictest of terms, Ents are not immortal benefit of the strictest of terms, Ents are not immortal benefit of the strictest of terms, Ents are not immortal benefit of the strictest of terms. being long and roung.

LOTR, 484). In the strictest of terms, Ents are not immortal, but they do live drums (LOTR, 484). before they take root. As such, most of their some and the strictest of terms, the strictest of terms, the strictest of terms, the strictest of terms, the strictest of their some and the strictest of their some and the strictest of their some and the strictest of the strictest of terms, the strictest of terms, the strictest of terms, the strictest of the strictest of the strictest of the strictest of terms, the strictest of the strictest of the strictest of the strictest of terms, the strictest of the stricte drums (LOTK, 40-1).

As such, most of their songs are long accounts of long time before they take root. As such, most of their songs are long accounts of long time the control of long accounts of long accounts of long accounts of long accounts of long accounts. a long time before the long accounts of the strange and unclassifiable character places and creatures from many years past. The strange and unclassifiable character places and world is almost always singing as well. Although it is never all the strange and unclassifiable character places and creatures the strange and creatures the str places and creatures now always singing as well. Although it is never clearly stated what Iom Bombaddi is almost always singing as mell. Although it is never clearly stated what Iom Bombado is certainly an Immortal. Tom Donness to, he is certainly an Immortal.

he belongs to, he look at the music of Immortals differently than the music of The reason we look at the music as a cultural institution. The reason the regarding music as a cultural institution, certain differences Mottals is because when regarding music as a cultural institution, certain differences Mortals is because the Mortals is because the Elves sing songs from the First Age because their in culture play very large roles. The Elves sing songs from the First Age because their large and perfect in their mind's eve. The Fire to be in culture play very many in their mind's eye. The Ents take many hours to convey memory is clear and perfect in their mind's eye. The Ents take many hours to convey memory is clear and perfect in their mind's eye. ngmory is clear they have existed for so long and have so much history to consider a thought because they have existed for so long and have so much history to consider that they are always deep in thought.

they are aways of the Immortals tell us about the Immortals?

It was singing in the fair elven-tongue... the sound blending with the melody seemed to shahe ituly in their thought into words they only partly understood."

JRR Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings

The Elves have a history of music from a time before history was measured Tolkien writes that they were first discovered by the Vala when Oromë, the Hunter Tolkien winesinging (Silmarillion, 45-6). Since then, songs and music have played heard ment single to their stories and have been their way of telling those stories. significant total stress regarded the power of the Elves to be in art, and in no art are they more learned and experienced than in music (Letters, 146).

That is not to say that music is always a matter of serious business with the Fives. On the contrary, the eternal youth of the Elves often shines through in the form of a nonsensical and whimsical song. It is true that he wrote the Elves as a more carefree people in The Hobbit than in Lord of the Rings, but the spirit of the Elves is consistent. The difference has more to do with the changing fate of the Elves than it does with Tolkien's intentions while writing.

When The Hobbit takes place, the Elves are living comfortably in their realms around Middle Earth. The name Sauron belongs to a sorcerer that penshed three thousand years ago, Saruman was a wise counselor, and in their gardens and forests. life was bright with no sign of diminishing. In Lord of the Rings, Sauron has taken up his seat in Mordor and is growing stronger, there are new enemies more cunning and cruel under a single leader, and many believe that the power of Elrond in Rivendell and Galadnel in Lorien, the two major strongholds of Elvendom in Middle Earth, will diminish. It is a darker time for the Elves and many of them are traveling west to sail over the sea into the Undying Lands, never to return again. This makes the darker tone of the Elves in Lord of the Rines understandable.

Regardless of the tone of the songs the Elves sing, it is always one of three subjects: nature, stars, or their ancestors. In The Silmarillion, The Hobbit, and in Lord of the Rings, Elves are very mindful of the night sky as well as the plants and animals. It is in this connection with living things that Elvish songs have a special power. They taught the Ents to speak by singing to them and they can tame many wild (not evil) beasts by speaking in their own tongue. Of the Valar, they hold Elbereth, Queen of the Stars dearest and have written many songs and prayers in her name (Silmarillion,

So what do we see of the Elves through their music in The Hobbit that we do not see in Lord of the Rings? Throughout Bilbo's adventures, we meet the Elves of Rivendell briefly and later we meet the Wood-Elves of Mirkwood. Though the Elves of Mirkwood are portrayed as greedy and unkind in The Hobbit, they are still goodnatured and allies to the enemies of Sauron. Despite the shortcomings of the Wood-Elves, they are severe in the way of an authoritative figure in a children's story would be severe. They are not lofty folk who are stiff and rigid as the Elves in Lord of the Rings often are. It is quite the opposite, when we meet the Wood-Elves they are having a feast with music and dancing under magical lights (Hobbit, 153).

There is only one song sung by the Wood-Elves in The Hobbit, but that is not to say they have only one song. It is the nature of the song that is unusual for the Elves; it is sung by the servants of the Elven-King while they are tossing barrels into the river (Hobbit, 182-3). The closest comparison one could make to another song in Tolkien's writing would have to be the Bathing Song sung in Lord of the Rings (LOTR, 101). In

short, it is a song of nonsense regarding a daily chore or activity. That is altogether different in Lord of the Rings. The Elves are more serious, and even Legolas, son of the Elven-King from The Hobbit, does not sing to make meriment but to mourn the destruction Sauron and Morgoth have caused or in memory of some tragedy that befell the Elves. The brighter songs are not silly, but instead solemnly sing praises to Elbereth. In Land of the Rings, Sam unknowingly recites an incantation to Elbereth he heard in Rivendell. Although it is a Hobbit singing to one of the Queens of the Valar, the song is an Elvish prayer. It is in doing so that he invokes the aid of Elbereth and fights off a terrible monster (LOTR, 729).

The reason we see this deeper and more grave side of the Elves is that the Elves are not called upon to do serious deeds in The Habbit. Their strength and power in song is unnecessary, so Tolkien writes them as they are in times of peace: happy and untroubled. When danger is at hand in Lord of the Rings and it is time for them to fight, we see their strong and mystical side in the characters of Legolas, Elrond, and Galadriel among others. Elrond may have made a brief appearance in The Hobbit, but there is never an Elvish character traveling with the reader.

It is not that the Elves in The Hobbit are one way and the Elves in Lord of the Rings are another. As Tolkien's characters often said of the Elves, they were both present and distant. They had a certain duality that allowed them to be dealing with the task at hand but also with their mind in some far-off place. It is that same duality that allows the Elves to be both silly and solemn. At times of peace, they are one with nature in a way that comes through as glee, though when they are at risk of losing it, their connection with nature comes through as a contented sorrow, pleased with the long years of beauty but all too aware of the impending changes, for good or ill.

THE ENTS

"A marching music began like solumn drums, and above the rolling beats and booms there welled voices singing high and strong."

JRR Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings

As mentioned earlier, Ents are not described as Immortal, but their lifespan follows the same pattern as the Elves. While Elves never die, they do grow weary of Middle-Earth and at such a time will sail west to the Undying Lands. It is the same with the Ents; after many years they will grow weary and move on to the next stage. But instead of leaving Middle-Earth, they become a part of it, taking root in Fangorn Forest. And just like the Elves who taught them to speak and sing, the Ents use songs to keep records of the past.

The Ents live long lives just as their language and way of speaking takes a very long time to say anything. An exchange between the Ent Treebeard and the Hobbits Merry and Pippin demonstrates their failure at brevity:

...a-lalla-lalla-rumba-kamanda-lind-or-burione. Excuse me: that is a part of my name for it, I do not know what the word is in the outside languages: you know, the thing we are on, where I stand and look out on fine mornings, and think about the Sun, and the grass beyond the wood, and the horses, and the clouds, and the unfolding of the world. What is going on? What is Gandalf up to? And these - burdrum.' [Treebeard] made a deep rumbling noise like a discord on a great organ - 'these Orcs, and young Saruman down at Isengard?' ... 'Hill?' suggested Pippin. 'Shelf? Step?' suggested Merry. Treebeard repeated the words thoughtfully. 'Hill. Yes, that was it. But it is a hasty word for a thing that has stood here ever since this part of the world was shaped.' (LOTR, 465-6)

Just as their language is long and rhythmic, so is their music. Songs in their own tongue would take many days to sing, but Tolkien wrote translations of a few Entish songs in the 'Common tongue.' We see that their lyrics are very descriptive and are always about other trees.

We can see that the Ents are slow and thoughtful, and as such they are very peaceful beings. As Merry and Pippin notice, 'they don't like being roused. Treebeard got roused himself last night, and then bottled it up again.' (LOTR, 482) The Ents do

But once they are decided on marching to war against Saruman, they become roused and might be considered very hasty. Their music is not long and descriptive anymore, but short and driving, with one motivation. The Ents are peaceful at most times, but their purpose in Middle Earth is to serve as guardians of the trees. For all their deliberation and thoughtful considerations, they will become very hasty and extremely dangerous to protect their forest.

Their hasty songs and driving chants wake up many other Ents along the way. It brings them all together in a way that has not happened for many centuries, and their song is the rallying cry that unites them. It was the song that gave them the strength and the numbers to conquer Isengard and east down the cruel wizard Saruman.

"Someome was singing a song, a deep glad voice was singing carelessly and happily, but it was singing nonsense."

-JRR Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings

Tom Bombadil is the silliest, yet most mysterious and possibly most powerful character that ever comes into The Lord of the Rings. His domain is the Old Forest, east of Buckland and the Shire. There he dwells with Goldberry, the River-daughter, and he is the master of everything within his boundaries. As Goldberry says to Frodo, "Tom Bombadil is the Master. No one has ever caught old Tom walking in the forest, wading in the water, leaping on the hill-tops under light and shadow. He has no fear Tom Bombadil is Master." (LOTR, 124)

These descriptions fit Tom well enough in the confines of the Old Forest, but how does he fit into Tolkien's Legendarium? At the Council of Elrond, Elrond remembers Bombadil many years ago when he was already 'older than old.' The Elves named him Iarnuin Ben-adar, or 'Oldest and fatherless' (LOTR, 265) These facts confirm that Bombadil exists in Middle-Earth and cannot be Mortal. He also has immense power as he can master the trees, destroy the Barrow-wights and even wear the Ring without turning invisible. At the same time, he refuses to leave the Old Forest, saying that his power ends there.

So what is he? To describe Bombadil, we must look to the means with which he describes himself and everything else around him: music. Tom is singing when we meet him, when he fights off Old Man Willow Tree, and he sings when he tells the history of the Old Forest. So to answer the question, we must look at what his relationship to

His strength lies in the songs. When he commands the Willow to release Merry and Pippin, he sings, and it happens. When he breaks the spell of the Barrow-wights, he sings, and they disperse at his will. To make the point clear, he sings and it is so.

As oldest and fatherless, is it such a leap of the imagination that he could be Eru Ilúvatar taking physical form? Tolkien himself never answered the question (Letters, 174). One school of thought regarding Gandalf after his return is that he is Manwe taking physical form (Unfinished Tales, 412). If a Valar could do it, the One, Eru Ilúvatar certainly could as well.

The mystery and the possible connection lie in the fact that not much is known about Eru Ilúvatar or Tom Bombadil. Eru Ilúvatar does not play a role in Tolkien's Legendarium after the Music of the Ainur and the creation of the Dwarves. He is absent from then on, and the Vala rely on Manwe's interpretation to learn the will of Eru Ilúvatar (Silmarillion, 16). And until Tom Bombadil stumbles onto the Hobbits in The Fellowship of the Ring, he had not played any role in Tolkien's Legendarium, only having been written in a short story Tolkien had published in Oxford Magazine

One thing we know for certain is that both Eru Ilúvatar and Tom Bombadil have a power in music unlike any other. The ability to create or at least to govern at will is a divine power to say the least, so does that make Tom Bombadil the One? Or is he simply the Master of the Old Forest, a guardian of that small and oft-ignored wood? It seems a strange thing that a being with power greater than Wizards and Kings of Men would live longer than the Elves but would only have strength within his own small, pre-determined borders.

Perhaps Tom Bombadil is Eru Ilúvatar. Tolkien has given us a few clues, and vague as they may be, they offer some insight. We know that Tom Bombadil is oldest, that he is the Master, and most importantly, his power is linked to Music. That does not prove anything, but it certainly says something about Old Tom.

THE MUSIC OF MORTALS

"If you can't distinguish between a Man and a Hobbit, your judgment is poorer than I imagined. They're as different as peas and apples." -Bilbo Baggins in The Lord of the Rings

While no music in Tolkien's Legendarium is written as extensively as that of the Elves', there are far more examples of songs sung and written by Mortals. Aragorn's claim to the throne is backed with songs that he knows that others do not. Hobbits even use music as a form of currency on occasion, as is the case in The Hobbit at Bilbo's auction (Hobbit, 301). While the Elves may live many years and see memories as a waking dream, Mortals keep history alive in song that is passed down

The Dwarves have always been the antithesis to the Elves. Though both races

are good-hearted by nature, they have a history of fighting each other. The Elves are good-hearted by nature, use that a loss of usuang each other. The Elves create for the sake of carfing themselves with their music than the Elves middle. They create for the sake of art wine one positive than the Elves might, but reveal a say much less about themselves with their musical instruments. When they are the parties of their musical instruments. say much less about themselves with musical instruments. When they do make music great deal with the nature of their musical instruments. When they do make music great deal with the nature of the great deal with the nature of make music they sing of triumphant victories in which treasures and jewels were won back for the

rves.

Hobbits on the other hand play a very small role in Middle Earth and no one but Hobbits on the other name page — —, some first meeting. Their history is noticeably and all ever expected much of them at their first meeting. Their history is noticeably Gandalf ever expected much of users acceptions that are often the subject of gossip lacking great battles with one or two exceptions that are often the subject of gossip lacking great battles with one to being warriors or even artists (Bilbo and Sam being and scary bednine stories. Not being warriors or even artists (Bilbo and Sam being and scary bedome stones. Too some stones for things far more practical and armsing. But as exceptions) their music is reserved not about normal Hobbits in their day-to-day lives.

The Hobbit and Lord of the Rings are not about normal Hobbits in their day-to-day lives. we see them using music in ways no 'respectable' Hobbits ever would What purpose does music serve throughout the finite lives of Mortals?

"It was a beautiful golden harp, and when Thorin struck it the music began all at once, so sudden and sweet that Bilbo forgot everything else." -IRR Tolkien, The Hobbit

As the Elves sing songs of the stars and the seas, the Ents sing songs of Entwices, As the Eives sing of gold and treasure. In The Hobbit we can mark the way that and the Dwarres sing or gone and the songs sing by Thoma and company. When in gold will attect a Death of the man a comfortable living room far away, it is easy for them to sing about the beauty and a comfortable arring to a horded pile of gold and treasure, the timelessness of jewels, but if you bring them to a horded pile of gold and treasure, the songs will turn warlike against any who may come between (Hobbit, 262).

Though there are fewer examples of their music than the Elves or Hobbits, they are the only people in Lord of the Rings or The Hobbit who are ever mentioned having instruments other than voice.

"Now for some music!" said Thorin. "Bring out the instruments!" Kili and Fili rushed for their bags and brought back little fiddles; Dori, Nori, and Ori brought out flutes from somewhere inside their coats; Bombur produced a drum from the hall; Bifur and Bofur went out too, and came back with clarinets... [Dwalin and Balin] came back with viols as big as themselves, and with Thorin's harp wrapped in green cloth. (Hobbit, 13)

It is a strange instance in Tolkien's writing where instruments so well defined in our own world are mentioned so specifically in Middle Earth. Outside of this passage, the only instruments described in The Hobbit and Lord of the Rings are harps, drums and horns: simple instruments that seem timeless. While the origins of these three instruments can be traced back centuries Before Christ, the viol and fiddle place us in Europe after the 15th century.

It is interesting that Tolkien should give the Dwarves musical instruments while it is the Elves who are the true artists and more greatly skilled in music. I say interesting and not 'unusual' because for the Dwarves to have such instruments makes a lot of sense. The Dwarves have always been making things and have always been praised for their love and skill in crafting. Although Tolkien wrote more about the Dwarves skill in building halls, the forging of weapons and armor, and the crafting of treasures, there has been one or two references to the Dwarves making toys and instruments that were of the best design (LOTR, 27).

In truth, it is very consistent with the story that these people who are considered builders before artists would have more instruments than the Elves. It may even be considered a crutch for the Dwarves to use these instruments. Often in Lord of the Rings, Tolkien describes the singing of Elves to be trance-like, and those listening often feel as though they are in a waking dream. Bilbo feels a similar sensation when the Dwarves are playing their song, but unlike the Elves, it has an instrumental accompaniment (Hobbit, 15).

The Dwarves are not artists as the Elves are in music. But their skill with tools and building make the items they produce an art of their own. Their skill in armory and smithing is a work of beauty, and so too are their skills in making instruments Were Elves more likely to use instruments, they would undoubtedly make good use of the Dwarven harps and drums.

HOBBITS

"He murmured old childish tunes out of the Shire, and snatches of Mr. Bilbo's rhymes that came into his mind. And then suddenly new strength rose in him, and his voice rang out."

NOLIFI JRR Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings

> The wizard Gandalf said in The Lord of the Rings, "Hobbits really are amazing The wizard Called all that there is to know about their way in a month, and yet or a way in a way wars, they can still surprise you at a pinch." (LOTR 6.7) ceclures you can they can still surprise you at a pinch." (LOTR, 62) Although he after a hundred years, they can still surprise you at a pinch." (LOTR, 62) Although he after a hundred years, they can still surprise you at a pinch." (LOTR, 62) Although he after a hundred years, and after a hundred years, and the courage displayed by Bilbo and his younger cousin Frodo, he may been talking about their music. The songs the Hobbits was talking about the rouse. The songs the Hobbits sing throughout set the songs the Hobbits show the individual growth of the characters like not. as well have been causing a swell have been causing in dividual growth of the characters like nothing else.

> adventures show the hobbit and Lord of the Rings deal with extraordinary while the stories from The Hobbit and Lord of the Rings deal with extraordinary While the stones with the look at how music figures into the lives of ordinary Hobbits, it might be helpful to look at how music figures into the lives of ordinary the average Hobbit will spend their days gardening or specific. Hobbits
> The average Hobbit will spend their days gardening or socializing depending depending will usually hobbits. Hobbits The average hobbits wealth. The evening will usually be spent entertaining on that particular Hobbits wealth. As such, the life of a Hobbits can be spent entertaining the control of the particular at the local pub. on that particular and the local pub. As such, the life of a Hobbit is filled with food guests or fratermaning and by music and dancing. Living such sheltered lives, they sing and drink accompanied by music and dancing. Living such sheltered lives, they sing and drink accompanies activities, be it a walking song, a local pub's anthem, or even song, a bout their everyday activities, be it a walking song, a local pub's anthem, or even song, a bout their everyday activities, be it a walking song, a local pub's anthem, or even a bathing song: Hobbits love music.

The Riddle Game

Riddles were all he could think of. Asking them, and sometimes guessing them, had been the "Riddles were as with other funny creatures sitting in their holes in the long, long ago, before only game he were played with other funny creatures sitting in their holes in the long, long ago, before he lost all his friends."

IRR Tolkien, The Hobbit

Not since the days of Beren and Luthien did a handful of rhymes and sones Not since the world as Bilbo and Gollum's riddle game did, though it must have alter the tate of the word matter at the time. Two Hobbits who happened to meet in a dark seemed like a street in a dark Ring, though they did not know it then (Hobbit, 73).

It could be that even in Bilbo's defeat of Gollum which robbed him of the one thing he loved helped to open some corner of his mind that had been closed for one using the hundreds of years. With Bilbo's rhymes about daisies and sunshine, Gollum thought hundred by John and Jocked himself away from, and as Gandalf told Frodo years later. "It was actually pleasant, I think, to hear a kindly voice again, bringing up memories of wind, and trees, and sun on the grass, and other such forgotten things." (LOTR, 55)

It was over the course of the Riddle Game that we saw a fleeting glimpse of Gollum's humanity. Though his isolation in the caves of the Misty Mountains and the Ring made Gollum withered and twisted, there was still some part of him that was a Hobbit. Though Bilbo may have thought his riddles were of the standard variety that anyone might know, he took for granted that he lived in a world under the sun with wind and trees. And it was in those riddles that Gollum tapped into his origins for the first time in centuries, if only at a subconscious level.

It is also well worth noting that the Riddle Game is Bilbo's first opportunity to prove his usefulness on the journey. For a simple Hobbit who has never left Hobbiton to be stranded alone in a deep, dark cave and coming face to face with a treacherous and hungry creature, it was no small feat on Bilbo's behalf to keep his head in such a penlous situation.

Gollum's notion of competing with the Riddle Game is an exceptionally Hobbitlike solution. As Hobbits are not needlessly violent as a rule, they often use their heads instead of their fists, which proves well for Bilbo. He wants to learn more about this creature and stall for time, so he agrees to the Riddle Game.

Though Gollum is described as scrawny, pale, and withered, Tolkien went on to make him a being quick with his hands and having an unbelievably strong grip, which made him a very formidable foe at an advantage in the dark (LOTR, 53). While a Man, a Dwarf, or even an Elf might have unsuccessfully attempted to meet Gollum with force at his approach, Bilbo met him with his wits, thus avoiding a battle he could have very easily lost. Instead he stalls Gollum to learn more about him while showing off his sword to keep him safely away (Hobbit, 72-3).

His memory of riddles and quick thinking for rhyming saves his life, and it won't be the last time. After escaping the Misty Mountains and entering into the dark and dangerous paths of Mirkwood Forest, Bilbo saves the Dwarves from spiders by coming up with a handful of songs to infuriate them and turn their attention elsewhere (Hobbit, 157-8).

To the Men, Dwarves, and Elves that meet them on their travels, they may think of Hobbits as funny little people that use their sense impractically on songs and thymes. But make no mistake; Bilbo proved that a Hobbit's ability to rhyme may be worth more than a warrior's sword.

The Similarities of Bilbo and Samuise

"I learned it from Mr. Bilbo when I was a lad. He used to tell me tales like that, knowing how l mus always one for hearing about Elves. It was Mr. Bilbo as taught me my letters.

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Samuise Gamee in The Lord of the Rings

It is true that Bilbo and Frodo Baggins are second cousins, and in the Shire that may as well have made them father and son (LOTR, 21). But the fact of the matter is that Frodo's gardener Sam Gamgee took more after Bilbo than Frodo ever did. They both started their story as respectable Hobbits, the kind that would never go and do anything unexpected. But after meeting Elves, and traveling through mountains, and facing dark and dangerous places alone... it's no wonder they ended up so similar. And nothing marked the change in their characters than their newfound penchant for

Interestingly enough, the first battles that Bilbo and Sam faced alone are strikingly similar. Tolkien pitted the Hobbits up against a giant spider and had their companions incapacitated. The outcome of their quests lay entirely in their hands, and without thinking of the danger, they performed brave deeds:

The spider lay dead beside him, and his swordblade was stained black. Somehow the killing of the giant spider, all alone by himself without the help of the wizard or the dwarves or of anyone else, made a great difference to Mr. Baggins. He felt a different person, and much fiercer and bolder in spite of any empty stomach, as he wiped his sword on the grass and put it back into its sheath. "I will give you a name," he said to it, "and I shall call you Sting." (Hobbit, 155)

Though Tolkien wrote the next passage in a darker tone for an older audience, he gave Samwise Gamgee a very similar battle to fight in Lord of the Rings.

Frodo was lying face upward on the ground and the monster was bending over him, so intent on her victim that she took no heed of Sam and his cries, until he was close at hand. As he rushed up he saw that Frodo was already bound in cords, wound about him from ankle to shoulder. On the near side of him lay, glearning on the ground, his elven-blade, where it had fallen useless from his grasp. Sam did not wait to wonder what was to be done, or whether he was brave, or loyal, or filled with rage. He sprang forward with a vell, and seized his master's sword in his left hand. Then he charged. (LOTR, 728)

This was a Hobbit that less than a month earlier in the story was not to be trusted with the oars of a boat (LOTR, 382). To say that the character of Sam Gamgee underwent a transformation would not be doing him justice. The same could be said of Bilbo Baggins in The Hobbit. A small person whom his companions expected a great deal more trouble from than any aid. Bilbo and Sam proved them wrong

In a letter to his son Christopher (Letter, 105), Tolkien said that not only was Sam intended to be more like Bilbo, but he was the chief hero of the story. It would come to pass that even though Frodo admired his cousin Bilbo as much as he did, he would ultimately follow a path more like the Elves, leaving Middle Earth to unburden himself in the Undying Lands (LOTR, 1029). It was Sam who lived for many years writing poetry and songs, meeting with the Elves, much like Bilbo had after his adventures (LOTR, 1097-8). It is in songwiting that they showed their similarities first, even before they used the same sword to fight the Giant Spiders.

Bilbo's riddles with Gollum were an impressive feat (one of them he had made up himself, on the spot (Hobbit, 74)), but more impressive were the songs he thought of under penl when fighting the spiders in Mirkwood. The dwarves had been captured and bound in webs and Bilbo was trying to draw away the spiders. Thinking quickly, he composed these verses:

Lazy Lob and crazy Cob are weaving webs to wind me. I am far more sweet than other meat, but still they cannot find me!

Here am I, naughty little fly; you are fat and lazy. You cannot trap me, though you try, in your cobwebs crazy. (Hobbit, 159)

The narrator points out the obvious: "Not very good perhaps, but then you must remember he had to make it up himself, on the spur of an awkward moment." (Habbit,

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of the Dwarves from their silky bonds.

With higher stakes and a deadlier opponent, Sam came face to face with Shelob, the daughter of a legendary spider beast spawned at the beginning of time. The guardian of a secret path into Mordor, Shelob is an enormous spider whose belly is at least 5 feet above the ground (Foster, 224). Up against this evil beast, Sam looked back into his mind and found music not of simple rhymes from the Shire but from his time in Rivendell:

'Galadriell' he said faintly, and then he heard voices far off but clear: the crying of the Elves as they walked under the stars in the beloved shadows of the Shire, and the music of the Elves as it came through his sleep in the Hall of Fire in the house of Elrond. 'Gillbanit A Elberth! And then his tongue was loosed and his voice cried a language which he did not know: A Elberth Elbebanit, a mail of pland-diriel, is nallon si di ingurutbu! A tiro nin, Funnilat! And with that he staggered to his feet and was Samwise the hobbit, Hamfast's son, again. (LOTR, 729-30)

A great deal more dramatic, Sam's incantation or rhyme or whatever you would call it seems very different from Bilbo's quick nonsense, but it is essenbilly very similar. At a time of need, the Hobbit looked within and found inspiration in verse that saved their life be it with the strength to fight or providing a simple diversion.

At the end of *The Hobbit*, Gandalf recognizes the change in Bilbo after he sings his now famous 'Walking Song (*Hobbit*, 300). The significance of the 'Walking Song' is that when sung to the right Hobbit, it instills a desire for adventures and dangerous, unknown paths. Each time it appears in *The Hobbit* or *Lord of the Rings* it has different words that altogether mean the same thing the road takes you to unexpected place the traveler has walked many miles and will walk many more, but at the end is rest. Bilbo's versions have always had an excited tone, eager to discover what paths will lead to a cozy rest beside a fire in some familiar place. Usually, but not always, it begins with the line, 'the Road goes ever on and on'.

The Road goes ever on and on Down from the door where it began. Now far ahead the Road has gone, And I must follow, if I can, Pursuing it with eager feet, Until it joins some larger way Where many paths and errands meet. And whither then? I cannot say, (LOTR, 35)

Frodo Baggins sings it twice in *The Lard of the Rings*, and both times he is weary and looks to an eternal rest rather than a refreshing one (*LOTR*, 73, 1028). It is in Frodo's words that Tolkien shows us the difference between him and Bilbo that goes unspoken amongst the characters but occasionally alluded to by the narrator.

Samwise Gamgee's similarities to Bilbo Baggins are a matter which Tolkien was very aware of in writing Lord of the Ringt but it was never explicitly said at any significant point. It was all kept very subtle. So when Sam is alone in a tower of Mordor and he tries remembering Bilbo's old rhymes, he sings his own words that strengthen his resolve as he travels down unknown roads (LOTR, 908-9). It never contains the line 'the Road goes ever on and on', but it has the same spirit and determination to follow the path, regardless of the danger it brings. Though it is named 'Sam's Song in the Tower' in the index instead of 'Old Walking Song (LOTR, 1139),' it fits a similar syllabic structure and the same descriptive tone as Bilbo's song always does.

In western lands beneath the Sun The flowers may rise in the Spring. The trees may bud, the waters run, The merry finches sing. Or there maybe 'tis cloudless night And swaying beeches bear The Elven-stars as jewels white Amid their branching hair.

Though here at journey's end I lie In darkness buried deep, Beyond all towers strong and high, Beyond all mountains steep, Above all shadows rides the Sun And Stars for ever dwell: I will not say the Day is done,

Nor bid the Stars farewell. (LOTR, 908-9)

The two songs are not identical, but they are more similar than one would think at first reading, and they certainly capitalize on the best qualities that Sam and Bilbo share. They both know that sometimes the Road will take you to dangerous places, but at the end of each road there is hope of life stronger than whatever darkness you came across along the way.

came across along the way.

The difference in Frodo is that he knew the road was dark at the beginning and he resigned himself to live a life of burden with no comfort in Middle Earth. Sam and Bilbo never understood world outside the Shire before they left it and along the way they knew in their hearts they would return home. And it was the hope of a peaceful Shire that Bilbo and Sam shared; Frodo did not keep that hope for himself, but strived to make it possible for others (LOTR, 1029).

CONCLUSION

Music is all encompassing. It exists for a multitude of reasons and it has much to offer us in terms of understanding ourselves and others. It provides us with a window into the past, or brings us closer to someone, giving us a common ground. Music can remind us of beauty and love and treasures, and it can also remind us of pain and loss and suffering. It is a universal language that can unite.

The existence of music in Middle Earth was not written by Tolkien out of obligation to define a culture. He never went at length to describe other arts in Middle Earth the way he describes the music. It was not a passing fancy that there is music in his world. Each song has a meaning, and every song reveals to us something we may not have known about the character singing it. This music means something to these stories.

What does this music mean to us? The answer to that question is the same as if you asked 'What do these stories mean to us?' One does not have to think that Middle Earth is real in order to think the thernes, morals, and ideals of that fictional place can be real. This music will mean something to anyone who believed that one person could make a difference, or found comfort in hearing the music that represents your culture. The music represents a certain bravery that may displaced from us in this modern age, but the spirit of warriors and the bonds of friendship still exist in this world with us.

That is why Tolkien took a real institution such as music and gave it to Middle Earth. Because there is strength there that has been lost. The music brings out the strength of Bibb and Sam and Frodo that lies within us, waiting to burst free at the sound of an uplifting anthem. When the coal miners of Harlan County rebelled and rallied to the sound of old-time and bluegrass music, we see the same spirit and will to persevere as the Ents when they attack lesenard.

Music is an important art. It transcends fiction and non-fiction, because even if these characters are not real, the music is. JRR Tolkien wrote the words, we read them, and we heard it in our heads. From that point on, the music was real, and nothing can change that.

Mike Dovle, Presiding

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Translation: "O Star-Queen Star-Kindler, from firmament afargazing, to thee I cry here beneath death-horrorl O watch over me, Fanuilos!" (Noel, 40)

Video Games

The year 1997 was an important one for video games. The Nintendo 64 had just been released, launching with Super Mario 64 and finally bringing Nintendo's mascot to Super Mario 64 and finally bringing Nintendo's mascot to 3D. Jack Thompson filed a lawsuit on behalf of victims of a high school shooting in Kentucky, beginning his fruitless campaign of proving video games are the root of all violence. A couple of students at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst formed one of the earliest video game music cover bands in their dorm and called themselves The Jenova Project.

Most importantly, 1997 was the 25th anniversary of bringing sound to video games. It took a quarter of a century for us to go from the blips of PONG to the beautifully composed score to Castlevania: Symphony of the Night. The soundscape that surrounds video gaming is as subtle as it is striking, drawing us into the world that's been created for us and creating a strong sense of nostalgia, whether it's with the 4-channel monophonic pulse waves on a Nintendo Entertainment System or the Dolby Surround Sound on the recently launched Nintendo Wii.

It is from this nostalgia that has spawned an internet-based community of musicians who arrange, record, and produce their own interpretations of the music from the games they grew up with. A ten-year old genre that is thirty-five years in the making, I will investigate the history of video game music, covering the earliest sound effects, the games and characters that inspired, and the nerdy legends since The Jenova Project that said 'Me too.'

In 1951, German-born television engineer Ralph Baer was designing a new TV when he came up with the idea of an interactive television. It was not until 1966 that he was finally able to put his idea in practice by designing a simple game called Chan, involving two dots chasing each other on a screen. Baer designed a Brown Box' with two controllers, a light gun, and 16 switches to determine which game you wanted to play. He eventually signed a deal with Magnavox that re-designed his switches to plugnicults, much like the cartridges that would be used in the future (Baer).

The Magnavox Odyssey was released in 1972, the same year Atan was formed and released the arcade game PONG (McDonald, The Early Days). PONG becomes the first video game with audio, consisting of simple beeps when the 'ball' hits a surface or passes a paddle. It is still a long way from orchestrated soundtracks, but the repetitive beep of the ball making contact is a crucial first step.

The next leap came six years later with the arcade game Spare Invaders (McDonald, The Early Days). The same 4 descending half-steps would serve as the earliest video game soundtrack, the tempo speeding up as the space invaders came closer. Similar to John Williams' work on the movie Jaux, it was an effective yet simple tool to build the tension and as a result, it really brought the player into the game. As the technology for the games became more advanced, composers were able to expand on this concept and write music specifically intended to build tension. One of the earliest examples of this would be Super Mario Brox., which featured about 5 or 6 songs including a haunting them that would a supervised of the same should be super Mario Brox.

theme that would play when fighting the evil reptilian king Bowser.

As video games evolved and allowed music to explore more possibilities, music would change not only for certain levels, but for specific circumstances within the level. For the Final Finlary series, each encounter with an enemy triggered the battle

music. As early as 1998's Legand of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, the music would change merely from the proximity of an enemy unseen, making the music 2 helpful tool to warm the player of an unknown danger.

Just on an unknown danger.

Just one year after Joar Insular hit the market, a game called Major Lugue

Bashall was released on the Intellivision (McDonald, The Early Days). It featured an
mpire that would call the game in a computer-generated voice with a vocabulary

Consisting of 'sinke,' 'ball,' and 'out.' It wasn't until years later we could plus yout
games with commentary so extensive and specific that we wished they would all shut

up. Nevertheless, it was an important first step to make for all video games, not just
poports related games. Some of the best voice actors can be heard in today's games, allowing us to connect with dramatic characters or laughing with the comical ones.

The year 1983 saw the first game with stereo sound. Jpp Hauter was an arcade game released by Midway with one speaker producing sound effects whethee other speaker played music (McDonald, 1980-1985). It was a small yet necessary victory, but and Europe. At the time, there were close to a dozen home consoles available, a far wider selection than the three major consoles in recent generations of systems. Many games were developed with lots of publicity but with little time, causing high expectations that were not reached. The meda saw fit to capitalize on these times of trouble as they had on the times of success only a few years before. Unfortunately the media coverage scared media outlets from investing in video games (Taylor).

Technically, the crais occurred in 1983, but the consumers wouldn't notice until 1984. Enough had been developed in '82 that there were games released as companies fell apart the next year. Ironically, it could very well have been this video game market crash that was responsible for the bright future of gaming we see today. With most of the American companies failing to produce or even stay in business, Japanese company. Nintendo released a console in America that had done so well in Japan under the name Farmicom. In 1985, the Nintendo Entertainment System was launched in America with the classic game, Japen Mario Brus (Liefoldin).

Since Nintendo's unprecedented success in North America, game music has been shaped by both the technology and the composers. Successful franchises often use farmliar music years after it was first heard. Some themes in the 2002 Nintendo Gamecube game Matriad Pime are re-vamped themes from 1987's original Matriad composed by Hirokazu "Hip" Tanaka. The technology has allowed for prettier sounding music with authentic instrumentation and more parts, but some will contend that with better audio capabilities, creative composition has taken a hit in regard to newer franchises.

When composer Koji Kondo began working on the soundtrack to Super Mario Bras, he had to make music that was compelling, tolerable to be heard repetitively, and he had to do it with 4 audio channels, one of them being a percussive white noise channel. With high standards and few tools, he had to trust the composition rather than the actual sound of it. The result was what would become a classic in video game music, recognizable to gamers and non-gamers alike and on Billboard's Hot Ring-Tones chart for over 2 years, peaking and remaining at #1 for quite some time (Billboard com).

While it's most recognized as a song with square and triangle waves and a noise channel, it translates incredibly well into any instrumentation. A number of symphony orchestras have performed arrangements of the Mario theme, including Play! And Video Games Live, not to mention 'Heavy Mario,' an adaptation of the song by the Swedish metal band, Game Over.

Many would argue that with the capabilities of newer generation systems (such as the Microsoft XBox or Sony PlayStation 2), composers are able to depend on the sound of an orchestra or rock band to fill out the soundtrack, relying on production rather than composition. A perfect example of this is the successful franchise Halo on Microsoft XBox; the main theme is performed by a combination of a rock band and an orchestra written by Martin O'Donnell. The music itself relies on the quality of the sound to be compelling, but arranged as a four-channel piece along the lines of an original Nintendo soundtrack, it falls short.

onginal Nintenios soundiracis, it thus short.

That is not to say the progress of audio capabilities in video game consoles is hurting the quality of video game music. Now that video game soundtracks are capable of using live performers and instruments other than digital controllers, fewer people are regarding video game music as a sort of B-list film score. In 2000, the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences accepted the soundtracks and Sciences to video games as eligible competitors for Grammy awards in certain fields scores to video games as eligible competitors for Grammy awards in certain fields (McDonald, A Brig Timelian of Video Game Musio). In 2001, film composer Heary Gregson-Williams composed the score for Mistal Gam Sadid 2: Sou of Liberty, and has done work on two Mistal Gam Sadid games since (imdh.com).

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Further bridging the gap between film and video games was the computer animated movie Final Funtary VII: Advent Children, a sequel to the PlayStation game Final Financy VII featuring music written by Nobuo Uernatsu. Uernatsuk music is some of the most influential in video games to date, having composed the scores to most of the Final Fantag series, Chrone Trigger, and Jason of Mana. He is currently working on Super Smart Brus Brand to be released sometime this year and in tradition with Saper Sanas Brax series, he will be arranging music from classic games such as Metreid, Legend of Zelds, and Marie to be performed by a full symphony orchestra and choir singing in Latin (Dalker).

These are only a few of the composers that have done work on some of the best video game soundtracks to date, but they are certainly regarded as the giants of video game music history. The works of Koji Kondo, Nobuo Uematsu, and Hip Tanaka alone are largely responsible for an entire community of musicians who have

After two years of playing together as The Jengya Project, guitarist Aaron Burke and drummer Matt Wood left the band, moved to Arixona, and created The Minibosses. Releasing their self-titled album in 2000, the Minibosses developed an internet following through a message board promoting concerts in Arizona called 'The Shire.' The Shire started as a page offering directions to a New Year's Eve party and a schedule of bands playing. Since then, it has become a chronicle of every concert in the state and its largest forum being dedicated to the Miniboases.

It is impossible to discuss the Minibosses without mentioning the Shiss. It is through the Shize that what began as a local video game cover band in Phoenix, Arizona became regarded as one of the top names of the genre with an international fan base. The Shire has become a haven for music-makers and music-listeners alike (commonly referred to as "Shizzies"), sharing the common interest of video game soundtracks. It hosts a monthly competition called 'Dwelling of Duels,' where board members are able to submit their own recordings (referred to as mixes) of video game songs following a certain theme.

It is through this competition that many recording artists refine their skills, receiving constructive criticism from anyone downloading the song. It challenges musicians to perfect their recording, mixing, editing, composition, and performing abilities. As of November 2006, over 230 artists have contributed over 600 mixes adapted from original video game soundtracks.

Unlike the Minibosses who perform direct covers of video game songs, many of the participants of the Dwelling of Duels (also known as DoD) elaborate on the music making each submission unique. Not only do submissions occasionally record songs with instruments other than guitars, bass, and drum machines, but some artists define themselves with their specific instrument. Andre "pingosimon" Beller, a classically trained bassist, submitted a collaborative piece with guitarist Ryan "Ryan8bit" Stern in which he arranged and performed for bass, cello, and viols. Ken "Hat" Crouch has managed to submit songs featuring his trumpet skills in the contest while serving in the 25th Infantry Division Band stationed in Iraq. He expects to come home for good sometime in February

Pianist Daniel "Kareshi" Brown is continually raising the bar for piano pieces submitted in Dwelling of Duels. He has recorded over three dozen songs on the piano to date; including an on-going project he calls "Project 667." With Project 667, he hopes to arrange, record, and mix a song from every game made for the Nintendo Entertainment System. His latest project was scoring the silent movie Phanton of the Opera using music from the Pinal Funtary series. He performed his work titled Pinal Phantom January 5, 2007 at this year's Music and Gaming Peatival (MAGPeat).

MAGFest is an annual convention held in Virginia every January. For four to five days, there are panel discussions on video game music, two nights of concerts, movie screenings, video game tournaments, costume competitions, and a 24-hour garning room. Many but not all guests are Shizzies, and it is regarded as the best opportunity for members to meet each other.

Daniel Brown was not the only Shizzie performing at this year's MAGReet. Among others playing both solo acts and in bands were video game soundtrack composer Jake "Virt" Kaufman, and Shawn Phase, who in an article with Nintendo Power Magazine was referred to as "the Kurt Cobain of 8-bit music (Myers)." Kaufman is well known for a feud between himself and the administrators of the website "Overclocked Remix" over a difference of opinions regarding the site's future. Overclocked Remix is a site where musicians can submit songs to be reviewed by s panel of judges, and if it is accepted it will be hosted on the site for download. After his departure from Overclocked Remix, Kaufman started a similar website called "VGMix," where all submitted songs are hosted and reviewed.

Professionally, Kaufman writes music for video games, mostly working with Nintendo DS and Garneboy Advance. To date, he has scored over 20 games and even more that were unreleased. He scored his first game in 2000 at age 19, Drymouth, a game for Gameboy Color that was eventually scrapped, but helped get his foot in the door as a game composer.

His first Nintendo game was Legend of Zohla II: Adventures of Link when he was 6 and refers to it as the first time he was moved by game music. "Even my mont was moved," he said, "she would urge me to 'go play Link!' and then sit there, watching and humming along." He had already been playing the portable keyboards for 4 years at this point and soon after learned to play the music on the keyboards.

Somehow, he was able to make time to score original soundtracks, run a massive community of game music mixing, and make his own mixes that are regarded to be some of the best around. "I did my first full-scale game arrangement (Contra) in 1900 or so, and then in 2000, I got my first game work. VGMix didn't come out until 2002. and by then I was already going insane trying to meet deadlines."

He finds it rewarding to have started VGMix, a place where so many musicians have grown comfortable showcasing their work. He adds,

What we have is a very specific niche, but it's a niche where a huge proportion of participants have crasy talent and the potential to hone their skills into careers. I want to help that along however possible."

Today, Kaufman has continued his work on game soundtracks, spending his free time working on VGMix 5.0, the eagerly anticipated re-vamping of his popular site which is expected to launch any time in the next two months.

Musician Shawn Phase has taken a very different approach to his work. Unlike Kaufman, Phase's career is that of an artist. Unlike many others in the game music mixing scene, his first instrument was percussion, picking up the drums when he was 6 in 1984. Since then he's learned to play a variety of different instruments, all of which find their way into his recordings. It wasn't until 2001 that he started doing game music, when he made his first recording with a module-based tracking program. "If the was either Super Mario Bras. 2 or The Goonies," he recalls.

"[1] got the ides to put a guitar with it and was curious to see if others had done the same. I put simple names like 'Mario' and 'Zelda' into Napster in 2001 and came across the Minibosses." After a correspondence with some members in the band, he played his first show live in October of 2002.

The interesting thing about a Shawn Phase concert is that it's one man playing a whole band's worth of instruments. Donning a 'Power Rangers' helmet, his pixilated camo panta, six Konami tattoos, and an original NES Powerglove, he'll make a recording of the drums, bass, a guitar part, and the original NIBS music converted to mono and play the second guitar part over that. He excely stands on the stage, preferring to get into the front of the crowd where he rocks out with the fans, occasionally letting the recording take over to drink his favorite alc-energy drink, Sparks.

His claim to fame isn't just performing live. He's made hundreds of quality recordings over the past few years under the name Temp Sound Solutions. Since beginning to record in October, 1997, he has produced over 140 full length or EP alburns. His alburns related specifically to game music are titled "Now You're Playing with Power!" the sixth of which is a 2-disc album of 120 songs released last month.

An artist who has brought serious dedication to his performance and production. Shawn Phase told me this in our interview:

"While I feel that documenting performance is important, be it with pictures, recordings, or video, I feel that the base element, the key essence of music is at the point of conception. Any true artist knows when something is finished and the most important element is being able to make the call when something is finished, at the true point of conception of a great piece of art. Being able to make that call is something I have struggled with over time, but I feel that a true performance is only great when you feel that you have completed this and achieved that essential step, the defining moment that embodies you as an artist."

Game music has touched a lot of people. I'rom the original areade games in the 1970s up to the personal surround sound flat acreens with an XBox 360 in people's homes, the sound has played an important role in the gaming experience. It took Ralph Baer to give us the game, Koji Kondo to give us the music we grew up with, and e Minibosacs to bring us together and show everyone what we can do with it.

Having these video games as a child really gave something that stuck with these gamers. They grew attached to the characters, became invested in the story where Link or Mario could save the princess, or where whether or not the Belmont family could vanquish Dracula once and for all, or the robot Mega Man that would try to stop the evil Dr. Wily. This music was there, an integral part of the game in the way John Williams' score for Jane or Howard Shore's score for Lord of the Rings became as important a part of the movie as the story itself.

What the work of these composers have done and continue do has inspired many artists. These artists will continue to recapture that nostalgia of defeating the final boss again, or the fear of dying before the world could be saved. And when they do this, you can bet they will only continue to inspire more artists.

By Mike Doyle

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Erotico!



The year was 2012. His name was Rex Harrison. She was a trapeze artist.

When they first met, she was in the circus, barking for the bearded lady. Rex Harrison was a well-to-do sort of eent, not the type to be seen at a carnival.

Which is why he was wearing a disguise.

She was calling, "step right up, see the bearded lady!" Our darling Rexy heard her melodious voice, and was guess all I can do is finish the jeb." drawn to it.

It was like Cinderella and Romeo. He was the millionaire actor astronaut. And she was a struggling trapeze artist, barkin' for the bearded lady.

Their eyes met, and said "hello."

Now Rex was not supposed to be doing naughty things, but he had to have this lady-of-the-night. (For you see, she only trapezed at night.)

They retired to the horse pig stables.

She was taking off his suspender overalls when the looked into her eyes and said, "don't call me." And she mayor burst in with his ward. Rex Harrison proclaimed, "Oh no! The mayor! And his boy, the ward! I'd best and suave and silky and smooth suggestion, "because,

Rexy darling ran out of the pig stable with his overall suspenders half undone. The lovers never saw each other

Fifteen years later they met in Morocco. Now 27 later. years old and the matron of a successful farm industry, Rex decided to invite the carnival under one of his many disguines. The trapezal woman was now running the big tent. Her 25 year-old bosoms commanded authority and

Rex was instantly recognizable to the trapeze woman NOT by his famous movie star hair, but by his eyes—the Ones she'd fallen in love with 15 to 20 years ago.

She said, "Babyl You're better than cake! And I G remember you!" And he said, "I'm sorry, you must have me confused with the mailman. I'm just a matronly matriarch." And she said, "NOI I remember your overall & suspenders. You're HIM. You're HE. You're that guy I almost did."

And Rex said, "Now that you've found me out, 1

"leb?" she said.

And he said, "I meant to say job, and I'd hoped you wouldn't call attention to it."

She took off his overall suspenders the way she almost did 14 to 17 years ago, and she said, "Baby, you're in TECHNICOLOR, and we're flyin' now!"

And they did it. Like monkeys hopped up on PCP and shit. And it was so hot, their clothes got burned off. like fuckin' lava. And she said, "this shit's cerebrall" He said "why, why would you say that?" He replied with slick you're gonna be living here, and if you call, it'll just get a busy signal."

And they lived happily ever after.

UNTIL they got eaten by timberwolves three weeks

But those were the best three weeks of their lives.



Jurassic Park

SPOILER ALERT.

O Dear Hampshire,

There's been a lot of talk about racism lately, and why not? America has a history of racism. When you turn on the news, read the paper, or receive a telegraph, more on the news, read the paper, or in likely than not, it's about racism.

But you know what's not racist? Jurassic Park.

Steven Spielberg's 1993 documentary about bringing O dinosaurs back to life on the small island of Isla Nublar opened my eyes to the truth that to live in a truly nonracist society, we must live amongst dinosaurs. They don't care what your ethnicity is, they will eat you.

And there's nothing like the character of Denis Nedry to remind us who the real villain is. Fat people. It's true. Whereas the issue of race, sexual orientation, or lefthandedness are attributes that we are born with and we should hold as a point of pride, being fat is a life choice, and a poor one at that. They slow down the group, they entice hungry dilophasaurs, and they steal precious dinosaur embryos to sell to that treacherous rascal, Lewis Dodgson, the safari hat wearing mother fucker.

Dinosaurs going crazy and attacking people bring everyone together, such as crazy South African game hunters, old men who spare no expense, sassy paleobotanist women, nerdy black computer technicians, and of course, morphine-addicted Jews.

If I may, I'd like to address some of the major themes that this Tyrannosaurus Rex biopic brought to my attention. I think it's more important than what you're doing.

God is a Dinosaur

This is true no matter how you cut it. As a metaphor, God is a dinosaur. Like Judi Dench said in the hit movie, Goldeneye "A relic from the cold war." And since she was in that movie with Pierce Brosnan who was in Mrs. Doubtfire with Harvey Fierstein who was in Independence Day with Jeff Goldblum who was in Jurassic Park, you can see how obvious this connection should be.

Indeed, God is a relic from days past. Just open the King James Bible, back in the day he was doing all sorts of crazy shit, wheelin' and dealin' guy that he was. He was all, six days of this, apple of something that, Red Sea, 40 days of rain, father of Jesus who basically invented the

entourage... God has the ultimate resume.

But now God is like somebody's grandpa who used to work in the raincoat business. Sure you spent 40 years making trench coats, but what have you done for me

And as such, we should recognize that God is an idea. We say God, and we picture some dusty old bones that meant something a long time ago, but now they're just fossils. We get charismatic guys wearing white pants after Labor Day like Alan Grant to study them and tell us it became a bird and flew away, just like good, decent, moral fiber. Because without God, all we're left with is a bunch of pigeons shitting on our heads from the proverbial 'Above.' And no one wants that, except for people like Lewis Dodgson and Alan Grant, because they always

Captain Ahab, the Land Sailor of the Dinosaurs

Anyone who's seen Jurassic Park and knows what Moby Dick is understands that there is a character named Captain Ahab, and he shows up in movies all the time. He's like Robert Shaw in Jaws, the chick from Twister who thought tornadoes were chasing were, and the crazy Russian submarine captain in Hunt for Red October. They're all Captain Ahab.

But Captain Ahab appeared again in Jurassic Park as Donald Gennaro, the lawyer who wouldn't quit. Just like Captain Ahab of old never stopped hunting that whale or whatever, Gennaro never stopped getting on your nerves. It was a never-ending quest. First he's all like, "Uh, I'm gonna shut down the park," and then he's all like "Uh, we're gonna be rich," and all sorts of stupid shit, like "put down the night-vision goggles, they're expensive," and "we'll have a coupon day," and "Uh, stop eating me." Seriously, when we see the triceratops, the three pronged beast of yesterdays past, he pisses his pants over a little thunderstorm. Did you see how he flinched at the first clap of thunder? That is not a man I want handling my legal affairs, I can tell you that. That is a man I was to get eaten while he's sitting on the toilet.

The man does not stop irritating you. Right from the get-go, he's standing on a raft while he's meeting the guy who played the drug lord in Clear and Present Danger. Who stands on a raft?! So you think you're better than me? Let me tell you something asshole. You got eaten by a dinosaur. You're dead. Spoiler alert.

The Best Laid Plans...

... always turn out great. Seriously, at the end of Jurassic Park, only good things had happened. Sure some people

died, but they all had it coming. Samuel L. Jackson was died, but Nedry wore glasses, Muldoon was a bit of an alarmist... the list goes on and on. If anything, it was a alarmist they died, because it decreased the surplus population. Ebeneezer Scrooge said that in a Muppet Christmas Carol. Not about those guys specifically, but others who deserved it just as much. So you have a few others in the world, the survivors have this lifeless later than helps them grow into a trilogy and possible fourth movie, and let's not forget, there is and island 125 miles off of Costa Rica where dinosaurs are living, and killing each other, and being generally awesome. And you know they still are, because they had babies. Remember? Life found a way.

Show me where it says people dying is a bad thing. And don't say the Bible, or I shalt redirect you to the first bullet point of truth. God is a dinosaur. Which brings us to the next religious hypocrisy, if God says Thou shalt not kill,' and then he becomes a dinosaur and kills. what now, mother fucker? Unless he's a herbivore, but I doubt it. God is a crazy mecha-T. Rex, with lazers spelled with Z's and body armor, and rocket powered teeth. No. you don't want to mess with that guy by calling him a hypocrite. Just feed him a goat and wait a while. You'll see what happens.

Science is Like a Tinker Toy

It doesn't matter what I want to do. Science will back it up. Say I want to go to the moon. Been there, done that. How, you might ask? Science. Say I want to pack more flavor into Cool Ranch Doritos. No problem. Really? Yup... science again.

It doesn't matter what you want to do. Science will do it for you. Because there is so fucking much of it, that somewhere there is an answer to your every crazy whim. Physics denies that we can cram more flavor into Doritos. There is not enough space and two objects may not occupy the same space. But chemistry says, wait, I'll add Sodium Benzoate food dye-12 and that will add more flavor in the same space. Science to the rescue.

Say I want to make a dinosaur. That shit is as easy as picking your nose. You find a mosquito in a rock, you jab at it with a syringe, put it in a toad, and you just made a dinosaur. Never again will you buy those shitty sponges from CVS where you put it in water and overnight it grows 3 inches. Who needs that shit? That's remedial science. Water make bigger. Write a fucking book about it. I want a dinosaur that's 20 feet high, and can run 32 miles per hour in the open. I want the T. Rex. Like my brother said at the movies when he was 3 years old, "I

MENOMENOMENOS.02.080M wanna see T. Rex again!"

Thanks to science, you can.

John Hammond is Obi Wan Kenobi

They're both old, they've got white hair and beards, and they both won Oscars. Next bullet point.

Drugs and Guns Equal Life

Many of those fat cats on Capitol Hill will tell you drugs and guns are bad for our society. But Jurassic Park proves

Take Ian Malcolm. A man with two first names who studies Chaos Theory spends the second half of the movie on morphine. And he's feeling great. He's witty, he's charming, he's got that shirt unbuttoned... and he owes it all to morphine. Science can medically prove that morphine is what helped him fight off dinosaurs. Because without morphine, he wouldn't have made it, and then there wouldn't have been The Lost World.

By doing drugs, Ian Malcolm saved the fine city of San Diego from a T. Rex and made it possible for there to be a third movie with talking dinosaurs. In the history of our world, drugs have yielded excellent results. The calculating wit of Cheech and Chong has entertained us for more than a quarter of a century. Jimi Hendrix's legacy is 40 years and counting. And so many others. Drugs are an excellent source of entertainment. Without drugs, we wouldn't have movies like Lethal Weapon, or Dazed and Confused, or Bad Boys 1 & 2, or Dude, Where's my Car?.

Sure, science can prove that drugs are bad for you, but I guarantee that somewhere in there, it can also prove that their good for you.

And guns are great too. James Bond, Indiana Jones, the Matrix, any Clint Eastwood movie. Guns are as American as apples and balls. When you shoot a dinosaur, you're being a good American. And you're only adding awesomeness to the dinosaur equation. And if you think drugs make movies better, get a load of guns! Terminator, Die Hard, Romeo + Juliet... guns are a happenin' enterprise. Sure, you never see a gun fired on screen, but you hear them, and you see evidence of it. If guns are good enough to fight off dinosaurs, they are good enough for our streets and schoolyards.

In Conclusion

Dinosaurs are great. Love Mike Doyle



An Ode to "That Fucking Guy"

This past May, I saw many of my friends graduate Safter four years of Hampshire College. There were the former residents of A1 long from my epic first year. There were many friends I met through theater and film/ video projects. And of course, many students I came to know just from wherever.

But none of those friends, classmates, and etc.-people had as profound an impact on me as someone I only knew as "that fucking guy." Over my past three years at Hampshire, I have seen that fucking guy as a rival, an enemy, a friendship doomed to fail, and maybe even as a soul mate.

I never really learned his name. I know I heard it a few times, and read it at least once at the commencement ceremony, but it never sunk in. He will always be known to me as 'that fucking guy.'

Our paths first crossed in February of my first year. Even though I never met him, I disliked him instantly. He had jeans that were too tight and looked like a bland and obnoxious wash. He wore either leather or denim jackets which pissed me off even more. His hair was goofy looking and ridiculously curly, and his posture and gait implied to me that he was a simpleton. I was convinced that if he opened his mouth, he would sound like a confused idiot.

So for most of three years, my feelings of hatred towards him were based solely on his appearance. A few of my friends had met him once or twice and told me he was a nice guy, but I knew better. That guy, that fucking guy, was a jackass who hated me just as much as I hated

Earlier this year, I got drunk and tried to introduce myself to him. I didn't want to go up and say "Hey, I hate you," so I said he was a cool guy and I liked his jacket. I told him my name, but then he gave me some fake fucking name, playing me for a fool. That PROVED

he was an asshole.

I continued hating that fucking guy as the months passed, seeing him less and less. When I learned he was graduating, I went through a spinning tea-cup's roller coaster of tilt-a-whirl emotions. On one hand, I hated him. Obviously I didn't want him to be around anymore. But if he was gone... who would I hate? I realized he was the Batman to my Joker, the Superman to my Lex Luthor, or the road runner to my Wile E. Coyote. Except HE was the bad guy.

Commencement came, and quite fittingly, he was the last name called. As everyone around my clapped and cheered, I shook my fist at my arch-nemesis. Some might say that he won the battle as he was graduating. I would like to think of the situation as though I drove him away. making myself the clear victor. But all things considered, it was probably a draw.

As the graduates milled around, shaking hands and hugging loved ones, I walked up behind him, tapped him on the shoulder, and extended my hand to shake his. At first, he looked bewildered, that confused face I had come to know and hate from a distance, but then he smiled smugly (like an asshole), shook my hand, and I walked into the crowd, never to see him again.

We said no words to each other, but something in his eyes told me he knew what he had meant to me these past three years. I am going to miss him. But only because I hated him so much.

Written by Mike Doyle, about that fucking guy I hated for no reason, wherever he may be.



Frodo Jesus

Raffi's song 'Banana Phone,' is the most important and significant musical piece since Bach's chorales, which and signature music theory practices we still use today. The great bard (Raffi) writes insightful lyrics that offer us an great band of the human condition. It burns us to our core, like some sort of dragon phone, and pieces us back together into the fabric of community, like some sort of banana phone.

Let's take a dive into this timeless classic.

NOMEINSE

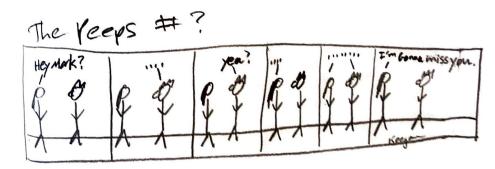
What exactly is Raffi saying at the start after ring-aling-a-ling? Is it boop-ba-doo-da-boop? That is to say using 'B' and 'D' consonants? I like to think it's kooka-doo-da-koo, that is to say, a liberal and hearty use of K' and 'D' consonants. Should my guess hit true, the significance of that introductory phrase would make Raffi's 'Banana Phone' a reference to Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper.' The K stands for Jesus, for a two-fold reason. First of all, it was Jesus who coined the internet slang 'JK.' He was notorious for using it, and it was ultimately what killed him. Judas was at the same time trying to promote 'IWMMAJ' which stood for 'I Was Merely Making A Joke,' and he killed Jesus or something to stop the whole 'JK' thing. JK lived on, but the Church attributed it rowdy soy farmers, because they thought if people associated JK with Jesus, they would think his name was Jesus Krist. JK Rowling later took the name so

that in the future, she could give a press conference to tell \Box everyone Harry Potter was actually a Canadian separatist and would get huge laughs when following that with an impeccably timed 'IK.'

The second reference Raffi's freestyle makes to da Vinci's Last Supper is that the D' consonant stands for Dinner. Jesus loved eating so much, they thought he had a tapeworm. His apostles reported in an interview with $\overline{\mathbf{O}}$ BBC that Jesus would frequently have no fewer than 7 meals a day. The religious conglomerate was known for having 3 meals before noon, including breakfast, second breakfast, and elevenses. At noon he would have lunch, followed by tea, dinner and supper. This fact, combined with the fact that in most depictions of Jesus he is wearing no shoes (that is to say 'shoeless'), we can say with some confidence that Jesus Christ of Nazareth was actually Frodo Baggins of the Shire.

You'd be hard pressed to make a convincing argument to the contrary. Frodo Jesus (as many scholars call him) bore a heavy burden and his sacrifice was made so that we may live without Sauron raping our livestock nightly. Even though he made his sacrifice and all that, he was doomed to find no comfort on Middle-Earth. And whether he sailed on a boat with a wizard and some Elves or he moved a big ass rock and left a cave, it doesn't matter. Frodo Jesus lives on in the music of Raffi.





by Keegan Kuvach



Lindsay Reacts, Continually...

Mod Lottery. OMG. SRSLY?

Public Safety. You've always been so wonderful to me. I really appreciate you guys showing up to Midnight Breakfast and greeting me at 5am (or later...earlier?) when I've been up all night with the Omen and have to go return the key.

Tara, Molly, Dina, Nate, Victoria and any other friends of mine who will be gone next semester/year good luck on your travels and adventures away from Hampshrie. I can't wait to see you when you get back! Victoria, don't die in Australia please. I was just educated recently about all the things in Australia that can kill you. (Thanks Sean and Jonathan for the helpful lesson in safety: Don't go to Australia)

Futon. You would be so good in the Omen office. I could lie upon your squishy body and snooze if I so chose while others worked diligently on the Omen.

Multiples of 4 Page Restrictions for the Omen. This really should never have been dragged out this long except for the fact that I need to fill up three pages or else I can't fill up any at all.

Jacob. Best of luck with that fork! It's probably got a lot more prongs than you know, and I know that no matter which you choose to stab your food of life with the result will be delicious.

Red and White Juggling Ball. I dropped you once while I was juggling. You hit the floor and presumably fell into a wormhole because I have searched my room at least 5 times, rearranged it and cleaned it entirely - and you are still no where to be found. If anyone finds a red and white juggling ball, please send it back through the wormhole to my room.



Letter to the Editor

Dear Omen volume 30 issue 5 Editor,

Your quote of the issue was fairly humorous, "A wild goose chase of naked!" which was quoted in response to looking for porn on the internet. What was not humorous was the fact that this quote was attributed to me. I never said these words and I find it abominable that you would misattribute quotes so willy-nilly in your publication.

Without Wax,

- Lindsay Barbieri +2 to Geek,

-2 to Truck Driving

by Lindsay Barbieri

I had lunch the other day with a young man who was filled with stories of grand adventure, generally involving a one-way plane ticket to a land far away, and the resulting attempt to make it back to Massachusetts without a return flight. In this particular incident a fencing tournament was held in the far away land of Las Vegas, Neveda and this young man was quite accomplished with his sabre. He bought a plane ticket, attended the tournament and it was not until he made his way back to the airport that he realized he had bought himself a oneway plane ticket. He checked his pockets - seven dollars. He checked his bank account - seventeen dollars. Needless to say, he did not have sufficient funds to return to Massachusetts.

Fortunately, he knew a friend who was passing through the area on his way to Iowa and so without much effort he found himself closer to his goal. In Iowa he met a truck driver who was driving to Northampton, Massachusetts and so hitchhiking back was a fairly simple matter.

The young man finished his story, saying "The truck driver was a nice guy, and I got to Northampton just fine." After a pause he added, "But driving with him was scary."

I wondered aloud if it was simply the prospect of hitchhiking across multiple states with an unknown truck driver that was scary.

"Not really," he explained, "It was more the fact that he had satellite internet in his truck, so he kept his laptop next to him and while he was driving he would play World of Warcraft."

TENOMENOS.02.08OME Get Away for a Geekend...

by Lindsay Barbieri

A blog post on March 13th 2008 visit conventioneers.wordpress.com for more details

With Spring Break only a day away, I've admittedly heen thinking about vacations. So is it surprising that, afbeen and a heavy dose of geekter and the Universe and Physics with my Cosmoling out about the Universe and Physics with my Cosmoling out about the Universe and Physics with my Cosmoling out about the Universe and Physics with my Cosmoling out about the Universe and Physics with my Cosmoling out about the Universe and Physics with my Cosmoling out about the Universe and Physics with my Cosmoling out about the Universe and Physics with my Cosmoling out about the Universe and Physics with my Cosmoling out about the Universe and Physics with my Cosmoling out about the Universe and Physics with my Cosmoling out about the Universe and Physics with my Cosmoling out about the Universe and Physics with my Cosmoling out about the Universe and Physics with my Cosmoling out about the Universe and Physics with my Cosmoling out about the Universe and Physics with my Cosmoling out about the Universe and Physics with the Universe and Phy ogy professor for nearly an hour after class was supposed to be over, I combined the three in my head?

So I am currently designing a brochure for a free highspeed wireless internet, beautiful library (with extensive sci-fi/fantasy/nonfiction/textbook/science magazine/ journal archive... etc sections) inn type thing with lots of rooms for exciting events (Ballroom for dancing, Gaming rooms, perhaps even an gymnastics/aerials room, etc.)

This place would host talks by engineers, scientists. professors, and anyone doing really cool things. This place would host gaming tournaments, LAN parties, LARPs.

costume parties, writing workshops and art shows. There would be a seemingly infinite number of boardgames, card games, roleplay games for anyone to use. Each weekend would have some featured things, but you could make what you wanted of the resources.

I'm envisioning hot tubs, telescopes, treasure maps, costume parties, kittens (with cameras at the ready so that you can capture and caption them doing funny things), a huge array of food and an amazing kitchen that anyone could experiment with...

Lacking the resources to construct an amazing facility for myself in time for Spring Break, I will be constructing the brochure and mapping out this imaginary place complete with a pretend schedule of events and so forth. So here is my question to you, what would you want to see at this imagined Geek Vacation Resort Facility Thing?

If anyone has any ideas, please let me know! lkb06

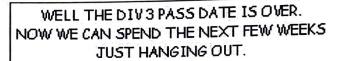






BLACK SHEEP & FROG.

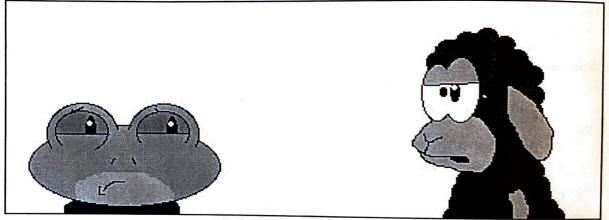
Probably Last Issue Ever





DAMN, THAT'S OVER? WELL I GUESS I'M NOT GRADUATING.







BY ANDREW FLANAGAN